Dai Densetsu no Yūsha no Densetsu:

Volume 4

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Densetsu:

Volume 4

鏡貴也
●かがみたかや

急に著者紹介を書けと言われてしまい、えええ40冊目でいまさら作者の紹介とかちょっとないだろうと思いつつも、初っ端なのでプロフィールを書いてみよう――と、思ったけれど、もっとおもしろいことしたほうがいいのかな？　ここで小説の連載とかしてみる？　とか言ってるうちにスペースが埋まる。次回！　小説の連載は始まるのか!?　つづく

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大伝説の勇者の伝説4
虚々実々の大幻惑

鏡貴也

ファンタジア文庫

大伝説の勇者の伝説
4
虚々実々の大幻惑
会ったことがないはずなのに、
ライナはそいつを知っている。
『女神』だ。
「こっちよ、若き勇者王さん」
その敵は、あまりに美しかった。

「……俺の前から、消えろ」
シオンがそう言った、瞬間。
彼の周囲に、数十本もの黒い剣が生まれた。

この世界から戦争を無くす。それが俺の夢だ

勇者王
レファル・エディア

周囲の国を吸収して急成長中のガスターク帝国の王。世界統一することで他国との争いを無くし、平和な世界を築こうとしている。肉体の一部を捧げることで、凄まじい破壊力を発揮する剣・グロウヴィルの持ち主。

“世界”をとりまく現実と3人の王様のこれまで

魔法の構成を読み解く異能の瞳・『複写眼（アルファ・スティグマ）』を持って生まれたために、人から忌み嫌われて育ったライナ。彼は、親友のローランド帝国王・シオンの命で『伝説の勇者が使用した超常的な力を秘めた遺物』を求め、各国を旅していた。

『遺物』の力を使って、誰も泣かない世界をつくる――ライナとシオン、二人の願いは一緒だった。

しかし、状況は激変する。

突然、シオンがライナを殺そうとしたのだ。そして、その時ライナはようやく気づく。シオンが秘密を抱えて苦しんでいたことを。

一方、ガスターク帝国の王・レファルは、シオンがライナを害することを予見していた。レファルは言う。古いお伽噺『『寂しがりの悪魔』を喰らって力をつけた『狂った黒い勇者』』の物語から、二人の“運命”は始まった、と。

大切な人が傷つく残酷な世界で。
誰もが笑って暮らせる世界を願う、
3人の王の闘いは続く――。

Interlude - About Another Hero

"You really like books, don't you?"

A voice suddenly rang out.

The voice of a lovely girl.

I looked up.

And there, I saw a young girl.

A very beautiful girl.

She was probably around the same age as me, around fifteen, sixteen years old?

She had a high nose and well-ordered features.

And long wavy blond hair.

"....."

That's right.

She had blond hair.

Blond hair that did not exist in the country that I was born in.

I narrowed my eyes a little as I stared at those waves of blond hair. Then, I looked into her eyes, snapped the book in my hands shut and said.

"..... not really, I hate reading books, you know?"

She then smiled.

Looking at that smile, I found it.

I found it to be a really, really innocent smile.

"Jeez ~, you are always lying. In that case, why are you coming to this library every day?"

I shrugged my shoulders and said,

"Because there's no other place for me to go."

"No other place to go? Ah-ha. In this greatest country of the northern part of the continent, Stohl Empire, this is the first time I've heard someone say he has

no place to go."

"Really?"

"Yeah. There are plenty of places where you can play."

"Plenty huh?"

"Yup. Plenty."

I smiled wryly at that. I looked at her innocent smiling face, and smiled wryly.

"Well then, in this Stohl where there are plenty of places to play, why are you here at this library?"

"..... that is because."

At that juncture, her eyebrows knitted as she looked a little troubled. Following that, she looked back at him intently, smiled with a tinge of embarrassment and said.

"..... you seem to be my type, I guess."

"Heehh."

"Hey, what's with that reply?"

"Nothing, I'm interested. You are cute, and your hair is beautiful."

She smiled again. With an innocent smiling face. Not having a single bother, she had a really innocent smiling face.

A face that showed that she fully understood her own beauty and the value of her own beauty.

She touched her blond hair and said happily,

"You are the first to compliment my hair. Is it that....."

"Beautiful."

I said.

"The dress you are wearing looks really good on you."

I said.

Her face turned a little red. Her eyes became moist. I looked at her face. At her blond hair. At her navy colored dress that looked beautiful against that hair of hers.

Then.

"....."

Then I recalled.

About my hometown.

A small settlement that was even further north of the northern continent.

In that settlement, people were born with a somewhat rare colored hair. Most of the children were born with peach colored hair.

Of course myself, my family and friends mostly had peach colored hair.

Conversely, there were no kids born with blond hair.

As to why that was so, I did not know, but in my hometown, I had never seen anyone with blond hair.

Ever since I was aware of things around me, I had never seen a human with blond hair.

That was why I was fascinated by her.

I was fascinated by the beautiful golden hair she had.

And when I looked upon her blond hair, I remembered.

"....."

A large army suddenly invaded our settlement suddenly, and my father, who was the headsman, had his head sent flying, and my mother and other girls of the village got raped, carried off, and killed, and we were ordered to surrender, those were my memories of that blond haired man.

The face of the king of the Stohl Empire, Fennen Dalas.

"....."

It appeared that the royalty of this Stohl empire often gave birth to people with blond hair. It seemed like such a hair color was often seen in those of nobler

blood.

In other words, she was a girl of the nobles. The clothes she wore, as well as the accessories, were of very very high, precious value.

She said. Looking at me with an enraptured look on her face, she said.

"..... your hair color is the real rare one. This is the first time I see someone with pink hair.

"Is that so?"

"Yeah."

"Is it strange?"

"No. I find it very beautiful."

"Really?"

"Yeah."

"I see. I did it. I got praised ~!"

I raised both my hands lightly as I said that,

"Ah-haha. You are really an interesting person."

She smiled.

I also smiled.

Looking at her innocent smile, I also smiled.

"....."

I smiled at that ignorant, stupid woman, who from looking at my peach colored hair, seemed not to know who I was and what you all did to me.

I was a hostage.

I was that son of the Northern Group's leader, Royle Edea. I was a pawn that Stohl was using to control the people of that area. The eldest sons of the famous Pentest and Orla families were kept hostages along with me, we had been here for three years. On the outside, we were treated as nobles, on the outside.

“…We aren’t even like ants.”

“Ah?”

“Wu, nothing, then this means your history studies have not been good.”

At this, the girl revealed a puzzled expression.

“Why would you think of that?” She asked.

“Do you know of Gastark?” I asked in return.

“Gastark?”

“It seems like you don’t know of it.”

“Wu. That’s not it, I know a little. It was the place that the noble Royle Edea extorted heavy taxes on isn’t it? They were freed by the Stohl army years ago. I heard before that, the people were always suffering.”

A warped version, it was written in black and white in the history book that was well-known by the Stohls.

It is the book I am reading now, shamelessly, a book that recorded lies.

Father’s death, the humiliation of the women, the slaughtering and ransacking of families, the ones who did the evil deeds were clearly the Stohl army.

In the Gastark before that time period the life that everyone lived in was only, was only, a warless, peaceful, normal group of manors.

At this moment, the girl said with a strange expression

“But, what is this to do with anything?”

“Nothing, now, that is what I am reading on.”

Saying that, I extended the book that was written with nonsense to her.

Her eyes widened, as if understanding something, said

“Ah. Don’t tell me you are the legendary historian?”

Hearing this, I shook my head

“Definitely not! From any angle I hate history.”

“Ah~?!”

Seeing her doubtful face, I continued

“Yes, no matter which history book, they all write about the same boring things, they spend thousands of chapters talking about the people who caused the war, then people died, in the end who died all of this. But humans are foolish. They don’t learn from their mistakes, they only follow their lusts, human’s desires are limitless. I want, I want, I want more.” I finished in a breath, feeling as if I had removed a heavy stone from my chest.

At this moment, the silly girl in front of me, a rare slightly stern expression appearing on her face, using a happy tone to say: “So that’s it, just by thinking about complicated matters you will be called a historian.”

“Eh is that so?”

“Wu, yes.”

“Then. Maybe that is true, I say, you must be thinking that I am a boring person, and feel utmost disappointment to me.”

But the progression of affairs were not what I expected, she shook her head.

Looking at me with a serious expression

“No, I feel that you are very special, the men by my side, only know how to enjoy themselves every day, causing trouble like idiots everywhere, only thinking of chasing girls every day… I, I feel that someone who is as solemn as you this is my first time seeing it.” Hearing her say this, I laughed.

“Actually as long as I think about chasing girls, I will become excited, especially a cute girl like you in front of me, it makes me think of those matters.”

Saying that, I extended my hand to her.

The girl in front of me reddened.

“I, I don’t even know your name…”

“Riphal, Riphal Edea, then, milady, what is your name?”

“My name…”

Suddenly a voice spoke up at that moment.

“Ri~ph~al” the man’s voice, so that person was in the same library.

But I decided to ignore this voice.

“Then, could you tell me your name…”

“Alright. Alright. Look towards me, from now you have to listen to what I say, Riphal”

“Your name…”

“Alright, listen to me”

“Your…”

“I say, quickly look towards me, Ripha, Riphal. Riphal!”

“Ah ah, nooiiiiiissssssssssssy!” I yelled angrily and looked at that person.

Then I saw a youth sitting in the last row of the library reading about Stohle’s magic.

It was a beautiful boy with porcelain skin and a pair of eyes that would make one feel pleased.

Wearing blue clothes, clothes like the military, a boy who had the same peach-coloured hair as me.

He was the eldest son of the well-known Pentest family who was a hostage like me, my friend—Reeglewaz Pentest.

“What is it. Reez, now is the important moment”

That person called Reez used his beautiful eyes to look over here, then his eyes landed on the blond beauty behind me.

“…I say Riphal, your flirting skills will never hook up that girl” His words made me angry,

“Huuuuuuuuuuuh?!”

At this moment, the girl behind me whose name was still unknown spoke

“Hey. I say Riphal, who is that person.”

The girl’s voice was slightly unsatisfied

Looking at this scene, I was slightly panicked

“That… ignore this person…”

I decided to ignore him first.

Upon seeing this scene Reez yelled unhappily

“Is that acceptable? Riphal? We are the nobles of Gastark, but what about you?

You deal with stupid women who brains~are~filled~with~nothing, don’t you feel embarrassed? Your reputation?”

The girl’s flush immediately reached her neck, this was different from the shyness from earlier, this was clearly an expression that one would have when they were so angry, obviously those words had stirred her temper. Her angry face turned to Riphal “Huh? Wha, what, you, you you aren’t you Gastark people, aren’t you, you the hostages sent from that are? That, what is that broken land counted as before me, I, I am the daughter of Earl Sapullo. You have no right to speak to me so arrogantly!”

Saying this, her angry face twisted, even so. Her face was still cute.

Then she walked away angrily, without looking back.

Now, our originally modest and lowly standing would be even worse because of the earl’s revenge.

We would throw away this completely petty position.

So I chased after her. So that this could be amended, I frantically chased after her.

“That, please listen to me, don’t take note of that person’s words…”

My voice was quickly drowned out by Reez’s words

“Ah, you finally reveal your vixen-like personality, see that, Riphal, she revealed her true colours, this kind of shrew is not suitable for you.”

“I say, can you not keep your mouth shut…”

“Un, unforgivable, you group of hooligans, I definitely will not forgive you!”

“My word. Can you not make your decision so quickly, eh… this is a misunderstanding.”

“Since I can’t forgive you, then I should kill you, yes, I will let Father kill this group of dirty people!”

She screamed this scary matter, with a face as if she were about to cry, she escaped from the library.

I stood there in a daze, watching this happen, I suddenly remembered something, turning to glare at Reez angrily.

“You~! Bas~tard~!”

Hearing this, Reez had an innocent face, as if what had happened earlier had nothing to do with him, talking to himself “Ya~ that’s good, Riphal wasn’t eaten by that shrew who had a bad personality, this is really good!”

“it’s good for you!”

Ignoring my anger, Reez continued to say

“I say you should keep your hands. After coming to Stohl, your specialty in playing with women has been overboard. You have to know, the women who are of this country who we want to avenge ourselves on. Where is the entertainment in that, it’s completely an unhealthy obsession.”

His tone carried concern. But now I was using a completely annoyed expression to look at Reez.

“What? …What? I have an unhealthy obsession? The one who is flirting with girls every day is you, after coming to this country, how many girls have been tricked by you?”

Suddenly, Reez carried a contemplating expression as he raised his fingers.

“It’s 0, I think.”

“That is completely a lie.”

“Don’t be so frantic, it’s very little, lesser than Riphal.”

“So I said you’re lying, if you compare with me, you have done it a couple of times more than me, a couple of time, understand? You pervert!”

Hearing this, Reez had a smug evil smile as he said

“Ah~ I understand, you are jealous of me, you are jealous that the girls like me better~”

“Nonsense! I say you bastard, your words really make me angry. Let us settle this, let’s see who is more welcomed, we’ll use this competition, do you dare to fight against me? You bastard?”

Towards me angry yells, Reez still had an unaffected expression as he stood up, nodding in agreement.

“Ah, that’s good, from today onwards, three days after this, let’s see who can steal the hearts of the girls, let’s compete on this.”

I stood up too

“That’s interesting.”

The two started to confront each other. At this moment, a voice spoke up from the side.

“What is the point in that? I say, you two perverts?”

Reez and I looked toward the source of that voice.

Immediately, in the entrance of the library, we saw the man who we expected, he also had peach-coloured hair that the Gastarks had.

He was a man who was older than Reez and I by one or two years.

A strong body that was strengthened by his training. Smiling features. But this smile could not hide the sharp eyes that would decipher everything.

He was brought to Stohle for the same reason as us, a hostage.

And, as the child was born for the constitution for “God’s Accordance”. The eldest son of the Orla family— Lir Orla.

Lir, Reez and I were good friends since we were young. We grew up together.

And only we were living together, in this stranger land, who would be willing to approach us, accept us, live with us?

We were helplessly faced with our parents dying.

We were helplessly faced with our relatives dying.

We were helplessly faced with our friends dying.

We were helplessly faced with our loved ones dying.

We were helplessly faced with our country’s name being stolen.

We were helplessly faced with our land being stolen.

In the end, we were helplessly faced with ourselves being sent over as hostages.

Now, looking at the similar faces of these people every day, we were already tired of it. But not long ago there was an incident that made Lir disappear in

front of us.

So, when we saw him at this present moment Lir had already disappeared for three months.

Seeing his face Reez smiled too.

“Ah, really, so slow. Lir, it was a really long wait, that you could play missing was relaxing, we were very troubled by it though, we had to think really hard of a plan to display our uselessness. We also had to display our preferences for wine, being perverted, and had to pretend that we liked to gamble, really, if we continued to play like that our bodies would be laid to waste sooner or later.”

Hearing this, Lir laughed too

“You must have been very happy.”

“Yes yes, but it was only normal, the girls in Stohl are only foolish and they only know how to look after their faces. Isn’t that so?”

Reez laughed as he talked nonsense and approached Lir, patting Lir’s shoulder, suddenly the light expression on his face disappeared. Seriously using a low, small voice to say: “Then, the process was smooth enough, you shouldn’t have returned empty-handed?”

Saying things that bystanders would not understand, Lir nodded

“No problem, it has all been settled.”

Saying that, he turned in my direction

“Alright, Riphal, we should step on that road that we cannot turn away from, are you prepared?”

Hearing this, a smile appeared on my face. A smile that said that I had been enlightened long before.

“…” Had I prepared?

Was there any need to ask? The preparations that Lir referred to.

I had already started on them long ago. From since my parents were killed, our land was snatched away from that day, I had already started to prepare.

“…”

But, this was not accurate.

It should be that ever since I had been born, I had been waiting for this day to descend.

As the eldest son of the Gastark Edea family, from the day I had been born I had been waiting for this day, this was my destiny.

Edea family—this cursed family.

Ever since we chose to take up the holy sword that could devour life Glovil, our family had taken on this curse. That sword that could devour the lives of people.

That sword could devour the hopes of people.

That sword could devour the dreams of people.

No, not only humans.

Divinities, demons, goddesses. And everything in this world nothing would be spared.

Naturally, this was a power that would not benefit the world in any way.

This power was not meant to be in this world.

But this sword was truly stabbed in here.

The power that should not be in this world was stabbed into the ground here.

Ever since I was a young child, Father had used this story to lure me to sleep.

A story that carried the ugly truth.

"…That, the power that should not exist on this world was originate from the periphery of the world Erelle."

"Erelle? What kind of place is Erelle?"

"Ah, Father doesn't know this too, but, it is said that that place exists."

"Eh~"

"Do you still want to listen?" Father said, then discovered that I was already snoring.

Father told me stories. The wording was very complicated, so it was very hard

to understand.

But Father, every day, every day, told it to me without being impatient. Because his father had done so since young, and this was the story that was passed down every generation of the Edea family.

Father continued to speak as if he were carrying out a duty.

“The scenery split into half from the middle, from the side of the split the Priests appeared, that was a Priest that had no human appearance, it was easy to see that the Priest were another entirely different organism, although they were glowing, but there were not divine. In contrast they made one feel chilled, the missionaries from the other world Erellehad unpleasant bodies and they descended, they walked into the middle of us and began to choose those who could withstand the power.

“In searching for the people who could withstand this power, nearly all the people who accepted the test died. In the end, a young man was chosen, a young man called Riphal Edea was chosen.”

“He has the same name as me so the reason we have the same names!”

“Ah, it’s like that, your name was to honor the First Ancestor, so we picked it.”

“Was he an amazing person?”

Father hearing this, shook his head. “He was a tragic person.”

“Tragic?”

“Yes, why was he chosen? He became the first cursed person in this world.

When the Priests chose him they said this. – Riphal Edea. You have been chosen, come and sign the contract with us.

– Ripal answered like this – No, I don’t want to sign any blasted contract with your group of odd people!

– Hahaha, hahahaha. –

– Who, who can come and save me!

That young man called Riphal Edea shouted weakly, shouted helplessly, shouted weakly, shouted unknowingly. The weak power of the young man was

unable to defeat what had been destined. How could he win.

The Priest threw a dark and long—so long that it was not possible to be a sword down at the young man's feet. It stabbed into the ground beneath the young man's feet. Immediately, the ground began to wail. As if predicting the end of this world, the ground shook, contorted, collapsed.

The ' *Priest* said again

– Alright. See this sword, take it up, Riphal Edea. Take up this sword, Riphal, take up this Sword of Regeneration, Riphal Edea. Then restart this world.

– No, I wouldn't take it. I hate this place.

Riphal yelled helplessly, but that was not helping. His body was as if it did not belong to him, his hands were moving, his feet were moving, his whole body was moving towards that sword, then he picked up that cursed sword.

– No. Enough. I can't stand it. Is there anyone, is there anyone who can save me! Riphal yelled in agony. But now, there was no one who could save him.

Because the other people who were with him were undergoing a mass

slaughter. Riphal's important people were completely killed by the Priest. Not only that, they also used their blood, meat, bone, spirits, dreams, hopes, despair to forge this sword. Using the sacrifices of thousands of living people to make this Sword of Regeneration. The humans before Riphal's eyes, people, friends, lovers, all were ripped into shreds, completely destroyed. The despairing screams faded into nothing, but, the Priest said that this had not ended. This was not enough to save the world.

The Mad Goddess and

The Demon from the Otherworld and

The Fallen Black Hero.

If this land that was under heavy corrosion and was about to be destroyed had to be resurrected, this power was not enough.

So the Priest said.

– Quickly take up the sword Riphal Edea, then restart. Let this world restart.

You become the true Hero. The Hero that will save the world. Create a happy world where there would be no fighting. So, you need our help, we will help you for this, then, quick pull out the sword, complete this ritual.

The Priest gave this order.

– Take up the sword, let your arm be devoured by that woman, let the sword be completed.

Riphal was unable to resist this order. If he rebelled against it he would die. His body also seemed to receive this order and it refused to listen to his commands.

Riphal had not choice, he pulled out the sword, the contorted ground was still trembling, he pulled out the sword. It was as if the sword was a part of his body.

Roots grew on his hand. At that moment, his whole body felt an indescribable joy. The voice in his mind seemed to tell him that he could never leave this sword. A kind of indescribable joy, from his brain to his whole body, a happiness that numbed all pain. Even so, Riphal still screamed. Resisting this happiness. Riphal screamed.

– No! Stop. Enough, stop it. What have you done? Why don’t you just kill me?!

But his wish was not accepted, the Priests only laughed. No, was that laughter? Or was it something else, no one know. But, the happiness was roiling in his body. He could no longer feel any other feelings. Riphal raised the sword, according to the Priest’s order, he turned to the woman who was sobbing in front of him.

The woman who was in front of him.

It was Riphal’s mother.

– Riphal.

His mother was crying and calling his name, but she smiled at Riphal.

– Don’t be sad, Riphal, this is not your wrong doing. All this is not your fault.

His mother smiled as she said.

He desperately struggled, frantically tried to stop his moving to the front, desperately trying to stop the stabbing sword, desperately trying to stop the movement that would kill his mother.

– Ah, aaaaaaahhhh, no, can’t, definitely cannot, I definitely cannot kill Mother, he yelled in despair. But, he continued to walk forward, as if the decision to kill his mother was already set.

He cried helplessly, no, he definitely could not cry. He gritted his teeth, he tried to use all his strength to reject this, but, this was meaningless.

– What, why do you have to do this.

– For your world

– The world changing has nothing to do with me!!

– Hahaha, hahaha.

– Me. To me, what the world changes into does not matter, so stop. Stop.

But, nothing changed.

His feet still continued to walk forward step by step.

His sword, that black and long sword was reaching toward his mother’s neck.

– St, stop, save me! Save me! Everything, everything, is mad! …

He screamed, desperately screaming, but, now it was too late for anything, he knew, it was too late for anything to be done. It had been already been done.

And, the worst thing had happened.

He had ended his mother’s life with his own hands.

His mother’s sad, lonely, but smiling and concerned face appeared in front of

him.

– Don’t worry, Riphal, it’s alright, you didn’t want to kill me deep down in your heart, so this is enough, don’t cry. In your heart you didn’t want to bear this burden. You don’t want to bear this cruel matter, that is correct, so don’t cry.

Mother’s words, Mother’s expression, were like the past. Carrying a kind smiling face, appearing in front of Riphal’s eyes.

– But, but, Mother, I can’t stand it, my body wouldn’t listen to me. If this continues, if this continues, even Mother…

My voice had not finished speaking. Then it was drowned out by Mother’s gentle voice, Mother still had that gentle caring smile.

– Don’t worry. You won’t kill me, I didn’t bring up that kind of child. So, please rest assured.

–But.

– It doesn’t matter. But, I’m sorry, Riphal. From today onwards you will be alone, I’m sorry, I apologise. You will have to face this world that has lost everything by yourself. I’m sorry. But you have to remember, the gift that I left for will can be felt in your heart forever… The love that I always had for you, from the moment you were born, other than letting you live happily, I had no other requests for the rest of my life. So, even if I die, everyone dies, you have to continue living.

No matter what kind of pain you face, no matter what kind of trouble, no matter what kind of despair you can’t give up, you have to continue living.

– I don’t want to, I don’t want to be alone.

Riphal shouted. But at this moment, the sword had already touched Mother’s neck, that black sword that had brought about this misfortune had already touched Mother’s neck, Riphal was shocked, terror gripped his throat.

Mother also saw the sword reaching to herself, but why, towards the moment where the Death God was present she still smiled happily.

– Don’t worry, I won’t let you kill me. After saying that, she used her hands to grip the edge of the sword. Then said – I love you forever, Riphal.

Saying that she thrust the sword toward herself.

– Ah…

Riphal was unable to let out any sound then. Another impossible matter had happened, the sword had pierced through his mother's body, the splashing blood was completely absorbed by the sword. His mother still smiled at that time, using that smiling face that was tear-stained, using that loving eyes to look at Riphal. As if saying something, but there was no voice, her voice had been sucked away by the sword.

But, what Mother wanted to say he understood, he knew what his mother would say.

That was a phrase that would never change.

I will love you forever, Riphal, I will love you forever, Riphal, I have loved you since forever, Riphal.

So.

So, live strongly.

Then, Mother disappeared.

Riphal could no longer say anything. In the end, the hand holding that sword slowly disappeared, the sword dropped to the ground, piercing into the ground again. Now the earth did not contort like it did earlier, the last unstable part of the sword that had been made in the Other world, after sucking up his mother's blood had resumed stability.

Seeing the scene before them, the Priests spoke

– It is done.

Looking at the same thing Riphal opened his mouth too

– I will kill you.

The Priests heard this and laughed.

– Hahaha, hahaha

– Don't laugh, I will kill all of you.

– The person who you want to kill isn’t me.

– Then kill

– The darkness that you have to cut open, is somewhere else.

– Receive your death sentence.

– Don’t be so obstinate. You still can’t use this sword. You were only chosen to use this sword. This sword has only been completed, your role has not ended.

The Priests spoke but Riphal could not understand, what did that matter? Kill them, kill this pack of bastards. Kill this group of monsters who could do nothing but create a corrupted and lonely world, Riphal’s mind was filled with this.

He picked up the sword, he picked up the cursed sword.

He picked up the cursed sword that had been created with the blood, flesh, hopes and desires of his loved ones, swinging the sword, cutting at the Priests.

But the sword stopped mid-way, his body refused to listen to him once again.

The Priests’ voices spoke again

– Don’t be in a hurry, brat, your role is not over yet, you still can’t use this sword, but the day where you can use this sword is not far off. The day where the ugly and evil Hero can be purified, and the day when the Goddess and the Demon will devastate this world is not far off. Before that, you are only a minor character, there wouldn’t be any great destiny.

They finally finished speaking, the surrounding scene began to change. A door to the other world opened. Then the Priests slowly left.

– Stop!! Don’t run away!! Riphal yelled loudly.

But the Priests did not heed him.

– Stop!! Immediately, I’ll kill you soon!! Stop!!

Riphal yelled angrily, but, the Priests didn’t even turn back, disappearing on the other side.

Leaving only Riphal in this world, the other people had been devoured by this mysterious sword.

Just like what his mother had said, there was only Riphal left in this world.

In this Gastark continent the only living person was Riphal Edea.

Riphal shouted

– Everyone wait for me!!

Riphal Edea shouted

–Don’t leave me behind!!

The ancestor of everything, the hero who was as weak as an ant was shouting

– Don’t tell me you will abandon me alone in this decaying place?

But, no one could reply.

At this moment the sky suddenly split open, the place where the Priests usually appeared in was a crying girl.

It could be seen from first glance that she was not human, no, it should be said that she had beautiful features that could not be compared to a human’s.

The girl in front of Riphal shocked him, he looked at this girl in a daze, looking at this girl with pink hair

– Who are you?

Hearing this, the girl immediately smiled, saying something surprising.

– I am here to help you complete your mission. Come, mate with me, then I will give birth to children, make children with me.

Giving birth to children who could kill demons, children who could destroy Goddesses. And children that could bring despair to the Hero— complete the mission with me” That was the complete story that his father would tell him every night.

Then, the ending was that the Riphal Edea who was the Original Him never used the Sword of Regeneration ever again for the rest of his life.

No, it should be said, after that in this world, Glovil was never reawakened as the Sword of Regeneration. That peach-coloured hair girl from the other world had children with Riphal and they built a village, streets, living on for generations. In this period of time there was no one who would have the chance to reawaken this sword.

So—

Father said

“So I gave you the name Riphal, like the Original Him, after experiencing the despair of death, tolerating the loneliness of living alone on this world, like him who never used the sword in the end. I hope that you can live without fighting with the world, playing with your friends every day, marry a pretty wife, then having a group of children, living a happy life that will be happy even till the end, I wish that you will become a person who will have a normal but happy smile, so I gave you his name. That is the meaning of your name, understand? Riphal?”

Then, every night after I heard this story I would hum. Then ask

“But. I want to be like Father, I have to be polite to the girls. Never betray my friends, never remembering the bad of others, doing what I think is right, isn’t that so!”

Hearing what I said, Father smiled, that was a happy smile. Every day, Father who had brought me up would smile gently.

Father was actually an amazing person, he was polite to the women, on good relations with his friends, not jealous of anyone, everyone living in Gastark trusted in Father.

His strength made me proud.

This strength always made me as a son feel proud.

Then Father told me a story that was too dark, too long, too deep for a child of my age that had a completely continuation.

“this is that last, I am going to tell you a very important story.” His face turned serious.

“…If say… I am saying if this happens to you. …If there is the situation where it is truly necessary for you to pull out that sword”

“You must escape, escape with all your might. This is not something that is to be laughed at. Protecting the world? Purifying the world? That is only speaking.

You, you only need to protect the people important to you. Protect your wife, friends, children that’s fine. The world and whatnot. Do you know what the world is? You don’t have to sacrifice yourself for nothing for this world that does

not acknowledge your efforts.”

Father who I was so proud of, actually used a slightly trembling voice to tell this matter.

“So, you definitely cannot pull out that sword in the holy cave. You can’t even touch it. If you pull out that sword, then everything cannot be taken back. You will lose everything, so…”

At this moment I revealed a serious expression for the first time

“I know, so I am called Riphal. Right? I will definitely live up to this name that never—used, never letting the sword reawaken.”

“Really?”

“Of course. I will never touch that sword. Because it is scary. I’m scared.”

“Your words will really embarrass yourself.”

“I understand, if I touch that sword, and break that promise I made with Father then it’s even more embarrassing.”

“Good boy…”

“Heh heh.”

“Then, sleep precious child.”

“Wu, good night, Father.”

“Good night, Riphal.”

This would be how my conversation with Father would end every night.

That promise was engraved in my heart, it is known that before the Stohl army invaded, before father died, it was also the day before my twelfth birthday, I remembered it all.

Then, father died, mother died too.

I was captured as the hostage of the Stohl army, I still kept the promise with Father.

Be polite to the girls. Be close with my friends, don’t hate anyone, believe in what you think is right.

Lastly.

Don’t touch the sword that would make me go mad.

Father died, I inherited the leader of Gastark at the age of twelve, inherited the ancient destiny of the name Edea.

Even if I was a child I still had to face my fate. To me, if that sword could gain justice from the Stohl for us, if using that sword that had strong, evil, mysterious power that slept in the cave, then the revenge on the Stohl could be anticipated.

But I still kept the promise with Father, I never touched that sword.

No, it should be said, there was no need to touch that sword.

Revenge or anything of the sort was something meaningless.

Because it was written in black and white in history, war was a meaningless thing. No matter what kind of strong country, in the end they would not be able to put off the fate of being destroyed by a stronger country with more ambitions.

There was nothing that could last in this world forever, so, snatching at these things that would disappear sooner or later wasn’t it ludicrous?

Couldn’t we live every day laughing, having a group of children, living happily like fools?

According to what Father said, no one would hate each other, walking on our own path.

Then, shouldn’t the path that we the Gastark citizens be walking on be the same?

“…" Then I passed on thoughts to everyone in these three years, then we became slaves.

No matter what unreasonable request that Gastark gave us, we always agreed, then we lived every day happily.

Then, the three of us, Reez, Lir and I, were given to the Stohle to keep under their control as hostages.

“…”

But, that thought stopped there. In the end, I realized that the idealistic world that I had was so naïve that it was laughable.

The world that Father wished for, was so pitifully innocent.

The gears that had run wild had started turning. As of today I could hear this creak creak sound in my mind.

Was this evidence that I was the chosen person?

I—just because the blood of the Edea family flowed in me, I had to bear the destiny that had been set by the Priests of the other world?

This I could understand. But I could hear it.

That destructive creak creak sound had already started to pile all this on the tracks.

So

“…”

So, I looked to Lir, then said

“… Have you heard of anything?”

Lir used his attentive, serious eyes to look at me, saying

“… Not unexpected. Just like what we predicted, the king of the Stohl Empire, is not human.” Not human!! I carefully chewed on Lir’s words, my face immediately froze.

“—Don’t tell me it’s a Goddess?”

“It probably is, when I saw it, that evil and ugly Goddess was eating a child.”

I listened to Lir’s words with a stiff expression, then said

“It’s a good thing you weren’t eaten.”

“Ah, yes, it’s all thanks to the Rhule Fragmei that I was able to disguise my actual body. But… even if there was that object I seemed to have been noticed.”

Reez’s face suddenly changed. Charging between me and Lir, as if wanting to protect me he stood in front of me.

“…Noticed? How could you return alive? This can’t be possible… Don’t tell me you have become a puppet controlled by the Goddess?” Reez used his body to shield me guardedly.

“It’s not that, these Goddesses completely don’t care about our existence.

Useless humans, foolish humans, only permitted to live as their nourishment, they are domestic animals, something like that, never mind I shouldn’t talk about this…”

Lir’s words finally made me laugh,

“Those fellows still don’t understand, these domestic animals already have the power to kill them.”

Saying that, I walked to the entrance to the library behind Lir, the Stohl capital was reflected in my eyes.

Then, I finally made my decision.

It was time to break the promise between Father and I. I made my decision. The promise between father and I to not touch that sword that would make one mad.

It was now time to break that promise.

Looking at the capital of the strong country that was not controlled by a human, but a monster. Softly murmuring "…Bastard… It seems like I have been born in a most tragic time period.

Father"

Then, Lir and Reez came to my side, I opened my mouth

"…I am going to use that sword, I am going to pull out Glovil."

Lir and Reez were shocked, they looked at me with stern faces, but they did not say anything.

I continued.

"Of course this has no link with revenge. Father told me, there is no meaning in revenge. But if the Goddesses interfere then it is another matter. Simply said.

These greedy people are destroying this world. They once wanted to devour this world until there weren't even dredges left, although the only Hero that could stop all of this had sacrificed himself, but that person had been tempted by the demon and had gone mad, becoming an evil presence, now things were progressing in the worst direction. So the gears of fate were starting to collapse.

The only thing that can stop all of this, that can stop this awful script from being acted out… Damn it. Although it is troublesome. But it seems there is only us."

I finished saying this, stopping. Carrying a self-mocking smile. Looking at the two friends who had played with me ever since I was a child.

"…Ah ah, this way the days after today will be difficult. If we do this, we may not be able to have this kind of life where we can spend every day playing, chasing girls, then playing the whole night, even so… even so, are you still going to follow me?"

As I finished speaking Reez opened his mouth

“Done”

Then Lir spoke too

“I have no opinions”

At that moment, I laughed and said skeptically

“O~K”

The two laughed too, Reez continued.

“No matter what, we will always be involved unwillingly, because this is what Riphal does usually”

Lir concluded it, saying

“That time when he peeked at the women bathing, I said I was not going to look, but wasn’t I involved unwillingly? In the end we were discovered, but the one who was injured was me”

“Right”

Why were their tones on this topic the same, I laughed.

“When was that. I say, that time when you two looked didn’t you have nosebleeds?”

“Ah? I am not the divinity of peeking at women bathing.”

“Me too, me too”

Although they said that, a different scene appeared in front of my eyes.

Lir and Reez stepped on Riphal’s shoulders and got onto the wall. They looked in excitedly.

“Wow. This is marvelous. Don’t you think so, Lir.”

“Ah ah, yes, I agree, Riphal come see quickly.”

What are you thinking, I replied helplessly at that time.

“Huh? You haven’t pulled me up, didn’t we say so before, I would be the ladder, then when you got up you would pull me up?”

“Was there such a thing?”

“I don’t recall anything of that sort.”

“You monkeys!”

“Ah, if you can’t see such a beautiful scenery, Riphal is so pitiful.”

“Yes, ah, look there, that lady is really beautiful.”

“Eh? Eh? Where where?”

“Really. The two of you, don’t look anymore, pull me up first…”

At that moment we were blocked by the people who had just finished bathing. It was that scene at that time, because of my relation with the two perverts, I was also lectured. Although I didn’t see it.

“…What is it, don’t change the topic, alright, that time you two owe me, from now own, you have to board the same boat as me.”

Reez said interestedly as he finished speaking

“This time we’re going to look at the Goddess’s bath pool, is it”

But Lir did not find it funny,

“Don’t, it’s horrifying, that monster’s bathing pool. Ah, forget it, there’s no use, just as long as it’s to free me from the boredom, going anywhere is fine.”

Reez continued

“Riphal you’re a big idiot, leaving us will do nothing. We should help him.”

No matter how they tease me, I don’t feel unhappy. In contrast I laughed. I laughed happily.

Then I remembered of what we had to do after today, my happiness turned to sorrow.

When I thought of the most troublesome, most evil matter, I thought that I would not be able to laugh from my heart after today.

Now the main point of our attention was that sword.

We had to revive that mad Sword of Regeneration.

Reviving it was easy.

It just needed ten of the people who had peach-coloured hair like Lir, Reez and I to be the sacrifices, injecting the blood and life into the sword. Using their lives and their spirits to inject into the sword and it would reawaken.

People, the spirits of those of the same race, would increase the evil aura of that evil sword. It would increase the power of the sword. It would take down the monsters— No matter if it were the Goddess, Hero or the Demon there would be power needed to kill them.

Lir said

“All of the aged have decided to sacrifice themselves. They have avoided the notice of the Gastark months ago, they have started to make their move.”

After confirming that the monarch of Stohl was not human, they stepped on the path, returning to their home land, the path to reawaken the evil sword.

“… so that the young and strong people can survive, if we old bones are still of use, then we will not step down from this position. They were all saying this.”

Reez continued

“…I heard my grandmother also participated.”

I discovered that there was an unspoken loneliness in his face.

His parents had been killed by the Stohl soldiers. If his last relative his maternal grandmother died, then he would have no relatives left in this world. So I looked at him.

“…”

But he didn’t say anything. Only, seeming to be thinking about something and kept quiet.

“… Ah, yes. Let’s not talk about it, everything has been prepared now, only waiting for us to set out.”

It was a path filled with thorns.

It was a disgusting path.

For the sake of moving forward he had to kill friends.

For the sake of moving forward he had to decapitate his friends. Then let the blood flow onto the path he was walking on.

That kind of path, I originally couldn’t stand it.

That kind of path, how could I tolerate it?

But I have to do this.

That crazy. Ignorant. That matter that just by hearing it would make one cry and scream, I have to do it.

From today onwards, the matters that can make me laugh from my heart, there will be none.

If I can escape this, I will think of running away to a far place.

As I shout, I will escape. If these matters really have to be done by me, I really will think of escaping.

But, that is an impossible matter.

The Goddess appeared, messed everything up.

Devouring people, devouring the world, then the monster that devoured everything appeared. So, now the place that he could escape to did not exist.

So, so

"…Alright, let's get moving." I said to the two of them.

The two nodded.

For moving forward. My hands were about to be stained with the stains of my friend's blood.

If I moved forward there would be no chance to turn back. So that my friends would not die for nothing, I could not turn back.

But, but, at this moment I still laughed, although I was laughing, but from my heart I felt a pain that really made me want to cry in pain, but I still laughed and said "… From today onwards, I am the king, Gastark's king, conquering other countries, slaughtering the women, for the sake of becoming Gastark's king, you have to help me."

Reez laughed too, indeed he was trying hard not to cry, carrying a forced smile he said,

"… Then, from today onwards, I'll have to call you Your Majesty—Your Majesty."

Followed by that, Lir laughed too.

"… Your Majesty, heh, annoying, a stern address."

I looked at the face of this friend who liked to complain and said

"Alright. Let's move out, leave this country, return to Gastark. The pursuing soldiers will immediately catch up, but, we are not in the mood to be caught back. Our Gastark Empire, from today onwards…"

Speaking until here, I stopped, then breathed in, loudly saying.

"From today onwards, the war where the world will be our enemy begins." Then, everything began, according to the worse script, everything began. No, to be more accurate, so that the worst script could improve somewhat, the war of

the Gastark Empire will start. At this moment, Reez interjected “Ah, yes, just to note that the wise King has carelessly mixed up an affair, may I ask for the permission to correct it?”

I immediately turned up my face.

“Don’t use that kind of tone to say things, how disgusting.”

He still had a childish smile as if he were carrying out some kind of prank

“May I ask for the permission to correct it?”

His lowly tone slipped out from his mouth, it could only be said, I wanted to vomit.

“What is it? What do you want to correct?”

Then, Reez continued.

“…Earlier, you said that when we had to help. The reason was that we betrayed you when we were peeking on the women’s bathing area, to return the favor, we had to help you, right.”

“Ah ah. I did say that.”

“That. Actually, it is you who owe us.”

Ah ah. Why is Reez talking about something I can’t understand, I moaned.

“Ah. What kind of saying is that?”

Then Lir spoke.

“…That’s because there were none at all.”

“Eh? None of what?”

“Ah ah. In actuality that female bathing pool was filled with people like aunties.”

They said.

At that moment I laughed

“…I know that.”

I said.

Lir’s expression was shocked.

“You knew? How could you have known that inside…”

I shook my head.

“I didn’t know about the aunties, I’m saying that I knew that the two of you liked to joke but you were very kind.”

So, this was the blessing that the heavens had bestowed on me, I had thought.

Having this kind of good friends walking on this path with me, this was a really big favor.

Yes, the people living in Gastark, there was no shortage of this kind of good people.

So I definitely could not fail.

The first sacrifices had already paved the road for us.

So we definitely could not fail.

Rush to the front. Definitely could not fail, remember about the pass. No regretting, moving forward according to my will.

This awareness. It had long been implanted in my heart.

I had to have a strong will. Even if my companions died, family died, I could not turn back, the awareness that I had to have a strong will and rush towards battle, it was implanted in my heart.

Then I took the first step, saying

“Let’s set off!”

Then they followed after me.

The devastating battle was starting.

The despairing battle was beginning.

Everything was beginning, but God, please give me the power to win this battle and bear everything.

This is my wish.

Chapter 1: Cursed α

There was a scream.

Ryner was screaming.

That was because he had seen despair.

Ah, no, it was because he had seen a darkness that was worse than despair.

"…"

He tilted his head as if he were going berserk.

But he had no other option but to face that despair. Although it was an extremely tragic scene, he could not look anywhere else.

So he could only look at the monster before him.

The monster was a human.

It had emerged from Vois Fiurelle's shadow.

For unknown reasons, Ryner knew her name. Even though Ryner had never seen her before, he knew her.

The Goddess.

The Goddess of Unsurpassed Vileness.

"…"

How he know her name, Ryner didn't know. But Ryner knew it.

No, to be more accurate, it wasn't Ryner who knew but something in Ryner that knew her.

Something in Ryner's body knew it.

Something that was the cause for the five-pointed star in Ryner's eyes.

He opened his eyes.

He opened his eyes completely.

When he opened his eyes, the five-pointed star turned red as if he had gone mad and glowed.

Then those eyes turned on the Goddess's face.

Because she had no eye balls, there were two holes where her eyes should be.

From those empty holes, worm-like creatures crawled out. She had no nose.

Her mouth was like a slit. Long teeth hindered her from closing her mouth properly.

But, because he saw this face, Ryner screamed. If it wasn't for the fact that he was looking at a face that definitely wasn't human, or like another creature, he wouldn't have screamed.

Of course, he had other reasons for screaming.

That was because he felt as if his eyes were about to rupture.

His eyes were about to rupture.

My eyes are about to rupture.

It wasn't only like that. The pain was almost as if his eyes had ruptured and fallen out of his skull.

Then, something almost dropped out of his eyes. It was something that made himself feel extremely uncomfortable.

Ryner wanted to block his eyes so that that thing would not drop out.

He tried his best.

But his hands could not move.

His body could not move either.

He could only endure the pain in his eyes, then…

"…This is outrageous. You were late, Goddess of Unsurpassed Vileness."

Suddenly, a voice descended from the sky.

This wasn't the voice of the goddess. The voice of the goddess, who had been abusing the land and fighting Ryner, had been so high-pitched that it almost deafened Ryner.

This voice was very deep and dark, almost like the one that rang in Ryner's mind, and whenever it spoke, the pain in Ryner's eyes would peak.

At this moment, the Goddess laughed. That laugh sounded ugly as it emerged from her torn mouth.

Then a worm-like creature crawled out from her shriveled eyeholes. Those

creatures looked in the direction of the voice.

“α? … So you’re here. It’s a little inconvenient that you actually appeared here.”

The Goddess said.

As if replying to the Goddess, Ryner’s eyes spoke. “The situation is different.

The Demon has already betrayed the Hero.”

The Goddess, who had no eyeballs, widened her eyeholes.

“Oh? …Then this host is the real body, not the Alpha Stigma we met before.”

“Ah, that’s right. This guy has signed a contract with the Demon’s half, the Solver of all Equations.”

Ryner could not understand the conversation. Although he knew that this was something important, the things he knew were extremely limited and so he could not completely understand them. All he knew was that the red, five-pointed star in his eyes and the Goddess knew each other. But who was the host they were talking about?

Unless?

“It’s me?” Ryner muttered softly.

The conversation continued.

Not human, but a conversation between inhuman creatures.

“Goddess,” the conversation continued.

“But why is that fellow still alive? Weren’t you given the task of destroying this world’s Weaver of All Equations? Why aren’t you accomplishing your mission?”

“… I said the situation has changed. For the sake of protecting his life, this guy’s mother disrupted the contract between us. Under the magic of Artofaru, I cannot work normally.” Ryner’s eyes said.

Hearing this, Ryner stopped breathing in surprise. Mother? This fellow just talked about his mother?

Even more mysterious was Artofaru this word. Ryner felt like he vaguely knew

about it. This was before he was killed by that weird guy, when he was in a dream-like place, and was under attack from a bloody monster with wings.

The woman said a word. In his memory, the woman said a word.

For the sake of saving Ryner and allowing herself to be eaten by the monster that shared the same shade of red as his Alpha Stigma, this woman had said this word when she was about to die.

“Leave this place quickly. Lieral should have been able to completely suppress this monster by using the Arofaru’s power, even so, escape quick…”

It was what they had said. Now, hearing it from his eyes and the Goddess, it was her, there was no mistaking it.

“…That person was my mother? That, that woman was my…”

Suddenly, Ryner felt the impact hit him, almost as if it was smashing his body apart.

It wasn’t literally, though. In reality, nothing had happened to Ryner’s body, only that he could feel something in his body change.

The alarm in his mind went off and a foreign feeling gripped his body. He could feel that he had found an important memory of his. It was a sealed memory.

It was a person’s name.

It was a familiar person’s name.

And it was the name of someone close to Ryner.

It was Lieral Lieutolu and his wife, Iruna Lieutolu.

“…”

Those two people's name triggered a resonance in Ryner’s mind.

“… That, that’s my parents’ names…”

He mumbled. His lost memories flooded his mind.

These memories were about his parents who he had thought to be gone. These memories were before he was five years old.

They were memories before the memory of standing in the middle of a blood-

stained battle ground, staring at the corpses surrounding him.

It was the memories about his kind father who was a noble of Roland and, with his father, his mother who loved him very much.

Those memories, those long forgotten memories made him want to yell.

Yell as he cried.

But he could not move.

Because of his eyes.

These cursed eyes were controlled by a monster.

The monster spoke, “And now everything has been complicated. All of the legends have been broken. Even Ω who was devouring Eris Litel met some trouble and was absorbed instead.”

Hearing this, the ugly expression of the Goddess became even more contorted.

“Ω was absorbed? Only the Weaver of All Equations has that power. What is going on?”

“I’m not sure. I only know that the monster that ate all the surrounding magical power—Lucile Eris is not of the same clan as the Eris Reed we know. I don’t think that guy is the other half of my host, The Weaver of All Equations. That power cannot be handled by that guy.”

What his eyes said made the Goddess cross her arms as if she was thinking.

Even though she had a grotesque face that should not exist in this world, that action made her as if she were slightly humane.

The Goddess spoke again, “Then what shall we do now? If we kill him now, the consequences would be disastrous. For your information, everything can be ended if we kill him. The Mad Hero can eat this Solver of All Equations then consume the Weaver of All Equations. If we do this, the cycle will be completed.”

His eyes protested, “No. The situation has been changed. The power of the Weaver of All Equations has increased abnormally. And this guy is my host…

he has lost all love towards the Mad Hero. He is allying with the heroes and fighting with the script. He has started to save him and he wants to pull the

fallen hero from the depths of destiny.”

“… Ha, saving that hero? Then, is this guy standing on our side?”

“Yes.”

“Unbelievable.”

“But this is the truth.”

“Wu…”

The Goddess looked towards the sky, using her shriveled eyeholes to look at something that we could not see.

“So, this slave has sent us the information… that everything has progressed beyond what is written in the script? Human.” The Goddess said. Vois nodded.

“Yes, Goddess-sama. I received the news that this person, Ryner Lute, was coming with me to kill Sion Astal.”

“Eh, so this person is at my disposal?”

“I think so.”

“… That’s good. I believe that the betrayal of humanity is wise. You have come to seek refuge with me… because we have a contract. (You cannot lie to me)”

Hearing the Goddess’s tone, Vois nodded. “Please be assured. Sooner or later, I will present Sion Astal’s head to Goddess-sama.”

“Eh. Then I’ll leave first. I will treat this person as an ally—α, I’m ordering you do to something else.”

“Another order? What is it?”

“Keep a close eye on this person. If need be, lend him strength.”

“Ha ha ha ha… Lend him strength? I am to help a Demon? I see. I understand, this is also good. This world is crazy.”

At this moment, when the Goddess entered Vois’s shadow, she said, “… When is the world not crazy?”

As she said this, the Goddess disappeared.

The rupturing blood red and intensely glowing five-pointed star disappeared at

the same time.

The invisible bonds that held Ryner also disappeared.

"…"

But Ryner could not stand up. It was as if the strength in his body had been sapped away.

Reasons. He thought of them immediately.

The reason was because of excessive blood loss. His left shoulder had been cut by a Roland soldier and it had damaged the bone.

And he had lost a dangerous amount of blood.

No wonder.

"… This is bad." Ryner groaned softly.

He almost fainted. His vision dimmed slowly.

This was really bad.

Suddenly, his brain was unable to handle the large influx of events. His consciousness was slowly fading and his senses dimmed.

Vois's voice said, "… Even if they faint, it's fine. I can still handle Ryner's and Ferris's wounds. So rest well. If there's anything, you'll have to wait until you're awake."

Vois's voice faded.

Losing all consciousness, *maybe I'm dead, maybe I died like that*.

Even if he was about to die, how could Ryner keep this calm attitude?

Maybe it was because he had remembered something.

He remembered something that was always elusive to him.

He had finally found the answer to that blank space in his memories, about his family and background, and the reason why he had these cursed eyes.

All of this lingered in his heart. To prevent the memories he had forgotten from being lost again, they lingered in his heart.

“…”

Then he lost consciousness completely.

Time passed.

Ferris woke up and opened her eyes.

Immediately, a lovely scene greeted her eyes.

It was the night sky. The pretty clouds moved across it, even though there wasn’t any wind.

Looking closely, she discovered that it wasn’t a cloud but it was herself.

She was jolting and moving.

She looked around herself and discovered that she was on a delivery truck. She was being transported to a place she did not know.

“…wu.” She said softly.

“What is the situation now?” She muttered and tried to sit up. Instantly, her body exploded with pain.

“…”

But she didn’t cry in pain. She carried that emotionless expression, void of character and checked the wounds that was left from the battle with Roland.

Then she discovered that her wounds had been wrapped up. Even the most serious wounds had been bandaged and it had stopped bleeding.

But looking at the wound under the bandage…

“…”

She revealed a surprised expression, softly saying, “…Strange.”

Indeed, this was strange. The wounds that she had were bandaged, so that they would heal, but they were not minor wounds.

They needed treatment such as stitches or using fire to kill the bacteria.

But the wound under her bandages had no burns or stitches. They had been

perfectly healed. Even the scar that would be left behind by the wound was not there.

And…

"…"

Ferris narrowed her eyes and studied her surroundings again. What attracted her attention was the delivery truck. She could not see the face of the man who was driving but he was a soldier wearing black armor.

"… Who are these people? Who captured me?"

Roland soldiers? Or another country or organisation?

It wouldn't be Roland's soldiers. Their soldiers wore white armor.

But these people seemed to be against Roland.

So who were these people? What situation am I in?

"…"

She tried to remember what had happened before she lost consciousness.

She could barely remember what happened. She knew that she had taken the blow that was meant for Ryner and lost her ability to fight. But they had won that battle and defeated the Roland army. Then, she had escaped with Ryner.

She could only remember that much. They had ridden a horse and fled in the direction of the Nelpha army. Because she had lost too much blood, what happened next was dealt with by Ryner. After that, she could not remember anything else.

What had happened?

"…"

What had happened after that? And what was the purpose of these black soldiers?

Putting that aside, where was Ryner?

Where was that man?

"…"

That thought flashed in her mind and she felt her heart thump hard. She suddenly had a bad feeling and started to get dizzy.

No matter what, that person should be injured badly. For the sake of protecting me. That perverted, shameless foolish man had his brain wired wrongly. He actually allowed his shoulder to be cut deeply in order to protect me, who had lost my fighting ability.

"…"

That wound he had gained was dangerous. If it was not treated to, it could cause the death of Ryner.

If it was not dealt with immediately, it could take the life of a person.

Her mind was filled with this.

"… That bastard. He left me here and disappeared? Where did he run to?" She mumbled softly. Then she sat up.

She didn't let out any sound. She sat up slowly, so that she would not alert the soldier who was driving. She sat up, crouched on the truck and studied her surroundings. At this moment, a voice spoke.

"… Ah ah, you're awake, Ferris."

Ferris knew that she had heard this voice before.

Ferris turned to the direction of the voice and looked to her side.

"…"

There was a vaguely familiar teenage boy traveling beside the truck.

He seemed to be fourteen or fifteen years old. He had a mop of black hair, a weird face and a pair of sly black eyes. He was dressed like a witch.

Vois Fiurelle.

This should be this bratty kid's name.

Due to Sion's order, she and Ryner had gone on a mission to find the Heroes'

Relics. They had came to a country called Iyet Republic.

They had to bring along this perverted boy so as to cooperate with the largest

organization in the country.

At this moment, Vois stuck his head into the truck and asked, "… So how's the wound? After all, Ferris used a Rule Fragment that has healing powers. If it was used properly, the effects would be good, but if it was used with a body that was incompatible, the person would die… What is wrong? You wouldn't be destroyed just by wearing a pair of short pants."

As he talked, he reached towards Ferris's skirt.

"… What. You bastard, what are thinking of doing?"

Ferris avoided him quickly. She kicked Vois in the face.

"Wowww"

Then, Vois flew off with a happy face. After checking that he had been kicked

away, Ferris got off the truck.

The surrounding black-armored soldiers emanated a killing intent when this happened and turned to her. Some unsheathed the swords at their waists.

Ferris looked at these soldiers.

"…"

Ferris coldly looked at these soldiers and emanated her own killing intent. A smile lifted to Ferris's face when she discovered how weak they were.

"…What are you thinking of, Vois? Using these weak scum to deal with me?"

As she spoke, she reached for her waist.

But. Her sword was gone.

She didn't know whether Vois had taken it or if it were lost on the battlefield. All in all, she was presently without a weapon.

But this problem wasn't a serious problem to Ferris.

If there was no weapon, she would just have to snatch one.

Snatch a sword and take Vois, who commanded these soldiers, as a hostage.

Then get news of Ryner's location.

She thought of this quickly and knew that this would be an easy win. The soldiers were weak and victory was in her reach.

So she immediately put her plan into action.

She put more power into her slender shapely body. She did not overly rely on strength. She relied on jumping. A perfect combination.

Then she calculated the air resistance, friction, resistance, weight, speed—she took all these factors into consideration and used them to accelerate her movements until it was the fastest. Faster and more efficient.

More powerful. Her body was moving so fast that the naked eye could not catch her actions—

"…"

At another side, "Alright, Ferris, stop that. I wouldn't be so foolish as to start a

fight with you.” He had not finished speaking when she had snatched a soldier’s sword like she planned, then held it to Vois’s neck.

Vois looked at the sword. The sword that could kill him before he reacted was on his neck.

But the faint smile still remained on his face.

He was still smiling.

“… Ah, Ferris is still as S as before. She wants to kill me because I took a peek at her panties…” Ferris pressed the sword to his throat.

“… Shut up. You’re a hostage now. I have the power to kill you, so reply to my questions honestly.”

The soldier beside them interrupted, “Let go of Vois-sa…”

Before he finished what he was about to say, Ferris sent him flying with a powerful kick. The other soldiers reacted. Just as they were about to crowd her, Ferris raised Vois’s body.

“…Can’t you see the hostage? Your master’s body and head are about to have a divorce.” Hearing this, the soldiers dared not to approach them. Vois raised his hands.

“…She’s joking. Everyone, sheathe your swords~. It’s alright, we know each other. Anyway, you don’t have to worry.” He said.

But Ferris’s sword did not move.

“… I don’t remember having a friend like you.”

“My my, that sentence really gave me a shock, you’re not joking, are you?”

“I’m serious. And you’re saying this nonsense only to buy more time. Answer my question now.” Hearing this, Vois continued to smile.

“Alright, alright. Ask your questions.”

Ferris asked the question that had been troubling her since earlier.

“Ryner… Where is Ryner?”

That question had been revolving in her mind for some time.

Why, why was she getting a foreboding feeling. Ryner had received a fatal blow.

For unknown reasons, or maybe a dangerous matter, that had caused him to vanish. She couldn't think like that.

The more she thought about it, the more anxious and foreboding she felt.

But it was because she was not strong enough. She felt responsible.

Why? What was it that made her so anxious?

"…"

It seemed as if something bad happened.

She could only confirm this.

Yes, something scary must have had happened. She didn't know why she thought of this. So she narrowed her eyes and glared at Vois and said, "…Answer me quickly. Where is Ryner and what is he doing?"

Vois raised his brows in surprise, an expression that said, 'what-is-this-about'

on his face. He said, "… Heavens, it looks like the person Ferris is most concerned about is that… Ah, how annoying, it's still the same person as before.

Your relationship with him is very good. It makes me jealous. Although my preferences are younger, around seven year old Lolis…"

"Shut up, brat. If you continue to speak useless nonsense, I'll make your life become something like your nonsense."

At this moment, Vois looked rather disturbed.

"…Wa, you're for real, huh? Alright, although I'd like to continue this game, my brain might move house if I continue to play. I'll speak the truth."

"…"

"If it's Ryner, then he's still on the truck. See, he's right behind you. Relax, Ryner has been seen to…"

He was interrupted by Ferris, who grabbed Vois's hair and leapt onto the truck.

"Ow…ow, ow!"

Ignoring Vois's cries of pain, Ferris continued in the direction of the truck.

But at this moment, the agitation in her heart could not be soothed.

Why did she feel uneasy?

An ominous feeling rose in her mind. This thought made her body momentarily gripped her body.

It was bad.

It was really bad.

It was worse than death. It was a monster that seemed like a monster. It was a scary scene of her possessing Ryner, as if she controlled his body.

"…"

Why did this strangely foreboding scene appear in her mind? Why would she imagine such a ridiculous event? She didn't know.

But it was better now.

At least she could see Ryner and hear that usual, foolish-sounding, sleepy voice and his ranting that would last the whole day. Ah, it was troublesome, that annoying ranting.

So she increased her speed. She rushed towards the truck that Vois had pointed to and jumped up.

"…"

It was like Vois had said, that fool was on the truck.

That mussed hair and the unmotivated face.

This was her companion, Ryner Lute.

This lazy person who talked of not sleeping enough was on the delivery truck.

He slept with a silly look on his face.

Ferris could see Ryner.

Ryner was right in front of Ferris.

Then.

“…”

Ferris released Vois and rushed to Ryner’s side. She checked his wounded shoulder. That wound had been obtained when he protected her from the Roland solider. But now this wound was healing.

The serious wound and the one on his rib were like minor scrapes. They had become a minor wound. Seeing this, she breathed in relief.

“…”

The worry she had felt, and all those dreadful things that she had been thinking of, and her feelings of unease had never happened.

Looking at this, Ferris could not help herself.

“…”

She could not help herself but say, “…I’m relieved…”

She said this from the bottom of her heart. Then, she smiled slightly and silently touched Ryner’s rumpled hair.

She slowly released the surprised breath she had taken. The worry in her heart dissipated like a cloud.

For unknown reasons, whenever she looked at this silly face, she would feel at ease.

“…”

She found back her calm. Turning her head, as if protecting Ryner, she pulled Ryner to her side and said,

“… Then. What is going on? Vois. What is the situation now? Why are you here? And who are those black-armored soldiers working for? And what you said earlier, you know the term 'Rule Fragments'… Don’t tell me you are Gastark’s companion?”

That was right.

Vois had used the term 'Rule Fragments' earlier. Ferris called them Heroes’

Relics. And the northern Gastarks called these Heroes’ Relics, Rhule Fragmei.

That was to say, this person's way of referring to those dangerous objects was the same as the people from Gastark. It was difficult not to suspect him of allying with Gastark.

So Ferris tensed and glared at Vois, then asked, "Answer me, Vois. Are you friend or foe?" Hearing this, Vois smiled. "… Will an enemy help you to heal your wounds? Am I right?"

"Then what are you planning to do now?"

"Yes, what will I do now?"

"If you don't say, I'll kill you."

"Ha ha ha, kill me? You're the same as ever. I give up. Then where shall I start from?"

"From the beginning."

"From the beginning?"

"Eh."

"Alright, I'll start from the beginning. Ah, right. Should you first explain why you were so uneasy?" Vois asked.

Ferris narrowed her eyes at him in suspicion. "… What are you saying?"

Vois shrugged.

"You didn't accomplish anything just now. You were frustrated from just now and you were frustrated about what to do, weren't you? Ryner's fine. He didn't meet any trouble. What, you were thinking about this so you didn't know what to do, right?"

This seemed to offend Ferris and she glared at Vois.

"… What are you talking about? No… Who are you?"

Vois laughed lightly. "… I. I'm me, of course. Ferris, Vois Feurel, fifteen years old, carrying the mantle of the Feurel Organisation and now the leader of the Anti-Roland Coalition—of course I'm joking. After all, Ferris knows all this, right?"

Ferris mumbled, wasn't this the annoying person who kept lying?

But even though she had recognized his lies, why did Vois had such a smug expression?

“Ha, what I’m saying is all lies. Towards friends, the world and the gods—did you know? This world actually does not have the existence of real gods?”

Hearing Vois’s proclamation, Ferris’s expression turned grim.

“…You have some sort of neurotic problem…”

Vois shook his head instantly.

“No no no, that’s not true. If my brain had some sort of problem, then that would be bliss. That way, I wouldn’t have to see this messed-up world lose its direction in its progress. I wouldn’t have to see this world fall into despair. But this is not reality, it is impossible to get any links to relate to the world’s truth. So I can only lie to escape everything. Right? It’s fortunate that lying is my forte.”

“… You… What are you talking about…?”

But she was interrupted by Vois. His eyes were filled with wisdom, as if he wasn’t that brat who like to lie anymore.

“The unease that you are feeling now is true, Ferris. Ryner has been cursed by the Goddess. His special ability—Alpha Stigma has been cursed. But even so, please look at this.”

As he spoke, he reached into his lap and brought out a glass ball the size of his thumb.

Ferris received it and said, “…What is this?”

Looking at the glass ball, she could say that there was nothing special about the glass ball. It was just an ordinary glass ball. Ferris glared at Vois and said, “…

What are you up to?”

Vois said, “Please use this glass ball to look at Ryner.”

“Glass ball?”

“Yes, this way, you’ll be able to see many things. I will explain to you in detail after you’ve seen through the ball.”

Ferris looked at Ryner with the glass ball, half-suspicious and half-trusting.

At first, the glass ball showed a muddled reflection. She couldn’t see anything.

But as Ferris concentrated, the ball started to get a little transparent.

Then.

"…"

Finally it became clearer.

The Ryner that was reflected in the glass ball still had that lazy expression. Like usual, he remained asleep. A 120% lazy specimen.

But looking at this Ryner, Ferris whispered, without thinking, "… What, what is this?"

Why did this happen?

On the body of Ryner who was sleeping peacefully, was a terrible scene. It was made of thousands and thousands of naked women who were dancing. They were like a crowd of spiders continuously emerging from the main body. These small, naked women ran all over his body. They let out a high-pitched "chi chi"

sound. Reaching out their scaly arms, they grabbed on to every part of Ryner's skin.

It was as if they wanted to forever withhold Ryner's freedom from him by tightly holding on to him.

But Ryner remained unknowing of this. Yes, without this magical ball, Ferris would never have seen this.

But this.

"…"

The scene the magical ball showed was like a scene from hell.

Then, she passed the ball back to Vois.

"W-what are those creatures?"

Hearing Ferris's question, Vois answered, "That is α. You might find this tiresome, but let me tell you everything I know. α is something the Goddesses made in order to destroy an unknown power in Ryner's body and so they cursed him."

Ferris aimed the magical ball at Ryner again. The bondings of those thousands of women were revealed again.

“If it’s the Goddess, then what are these creatures imprisoning Ryner’s body?”

But Vois shook his head, "No. These are only the curse the Goddess placed on Ryner. It is not the true body of the Goddess—although it might be argued. But α has the power to kill the Solver of All Equations. In a fight, α has the same amount of power as the Goddess…”

Ferris did not understand what he was talking about.

“Stop. Shut up first. What do you mean by that?”

Ferris knew that Vois wanted to use this interlude to change the topic. But she stopped him.

I don’t want to stop this. There are more important things that could be confirmed later.

So Ferris continued to ask, “You… Tell the truth. Who are you?”

Hearing this, he revealed that childish, innocent smile. “…Didn’t I say this before? I’m a liar. But this. This time, I’m a fool who can even lie to the gods.”

Looking at the monsters in Ryner’s body, Ferris asked again,

“… These disgusting monsters… Goddess whatever, are they the enemy?”

“… About this, huh. Currently, it seems as if they are on our side.”

“Then, they’re on our side?”

“It should be.”

“Ha. That’s unbelievable.”

“Ah? Then, I’ll change what I said. I… I’m the only ally of myself. I’m only helping you because I can benefit from it. Can you accept this?”

“… Huh. This can be more or less accepted.”

“That’s great.”

“So this means you’ll help Ryner?”

Vois nodded his head. “Of course. But this means you owe me. I won’t help

people for nothing—this is what my family taught me.”

But Ferris smiled faintly, “… If one uses the sword to exterminate the person who they owe a favour to, then there’s nothing to owe—this is the teaching of the Eris family.”

Hearing this, Vois’s eyes rounded in surprise.

“Wa, such a violent way, it’s really Ferris’s style, how nostalgic.”

Ferris only shrugged her shoulders and said

“I don’t think so. I see that not many people will lament over you.”

“Ah!? For real?”

“Ah.”

“I see. It seems as if my love is unrequited. After all, towards someone humane like you, even if I reveal my honest side, you wouldn’t feel anything. Ah ah, there’s no point indulging in these meaningless sad feelings. Let’s return to the topic we were talking about earlier.”

Vois looked around after he said that.

“Even though I said that, this isn’t a good place to talk about business. If we don’t go now, I’m afraid that the Roland soldiers will catch up to us. Let’s walk and talk at the same time. I should explain all the details of the story…”

“Explain in detail, but you wouldn’t tell me your mini plot.”

Ferris said.

Vois laughed, “Of course I wouldn’t say.”

Then Ferris sat down on the delivery truck that carried the sleeping Ryner.

“Then sit tight, everyone, we’re setting off. We’ll be chasing after those Nelphians. Then we’ll meet up with army from the Autonomous Holy City of Cassla. Let’s go!”

As soon as he finished speaking, the black-armored soldiers yelled, "Yes!"

Then, the delivery truck began to move.

It drove into the darkening night.

When the light signaling the next day broke over the horizon, they had already caught up with the Nelphan soldiers. Even the progress of the army could be vaguely seen.

Ferris softly mumbled, "…Wu."

She looked at Ryner again. She smoothed out that rumpled hair of his, then she grabbed it and hit Ryner hard. But Ryner did not wake up. He continued to sleep with a satisfied look on his face. He never reacted.

"…" Seeing this, she smiled faintly. Then, she resumed her strict expression.

"… So Vois. Let's start talking about business."

Chapter 2: Human α

The colour of the sky was changing.

It never stopped changing.

From the sky above Ryner, or to be more accurate, the sky above Ferris started to change as if it changing from afar.

Far, far away. To a place where many overwhelming events had happened.

Finally, it changed until the sky in the southern continent. The sky of the grey southern continent. A sky that was choked with hopelessness.

Under this sky.

Under this sky, stood a girl.

She had long red hair and a shapely body. She wore a peach-coloured blouse and skirt.

The girl looked to her side. Her face was flushed with embarrassment.

"That… That, Sion… I, If it's Sion, then you can do whatever you want to me."

She said this in embarrassment and pressed a hand to her chest.

"My body belongs to Sion-sama." She said.

Then Sion Astal looked at her.

His golden eyes gleamed under his silver hair. He looked at the girl's body with his determined eyes.

"Hey, then I can really do whatever I want to you?"

What was this.

But the girl looked at Sion and blushed harder. She replied, almost whispering,

"To me… It's your choice." Her voice could hardly be heard.

Then he walked towards her and touched her neck. When Sion touched her neck, the girl's body trembled. She was clearly nervous and excited, and her whole body felt as if it were on fire. Sion said softly, "Then, I can really do whatever I want?"

"Eh. It's your choice."

"I understand. Then…"

Sion's expression changed as he said, "Then… Die. Monster."

Sion gripped the girl's neck. He twisted it. There was an unpleasant "Crack!"

Sion knew that the monster's neck was broken.

Under these circumstances, that person would have died immediately.

A normal girl would have died immediately.

But the girl laughed.

Although her neck was broken, but she still could move. She grabbed on to Sion's shoulders and hugged him tightly.

"…Aha, Ahahaha. Sion is so childish. But you used to like my behavior. Please, use more strength and fall into the entangled web of love with me… Fall with me and land in this kind of abyss. Never turn back. Be passionate, release yourself, Hero!"

As the girl said this, she widened her eyes. She stared at Sion.

Her eyes became wider. And wider. In the end, her eyeballs fell out but the girl still continued to laugh.

<Ahahaha hahahaha, shahahaha.>

Sion's face tightened.

"… My ears."

He used his other hand to clench the girl's head hard and attempted to twist her head off completely to stop that voice that was making him crazy.

But no matter how hard he tried to twist or to break, the sounds of the girl's laughter continued. To make matters worse, the hair he gripped in his hands started to wriggle and squirm. They crawled to Sion's wrist. The areas where the moving hair touched caused a numb feeling to spread throughout his body.

Sion momentarily lost conscious.

Then the scary voice of the girl said.

"Ahahahaha. It's no use. As long as it is a human, if they are touched by my body, they will lose their sense of self. Your life ends here. This is your end.

You will become part of me, and fall into the darkness with me. Just like the previous king. Just like your father."

As she related the horrible affair, her hair reached towards the rest of Sion's body. No, that could not be called hair any longer. Sion released her hair because that thing had melted, as if it were a liquid and stuck to Sion's hands and wrists.

She slowly, slowly eroded Sion's body.

"…Wu…"

Sion groaned in pain.

He tried to think of a plan to escape from her control, but he could think of none.

She started to invade his body.

She started to take control of his body.

It was like there was no defense against her actions.

Sion's face tensed.

"…Bastard."

It was obvious. He could only subject himself to his fate.

In the deep abyss of despair, he suddenly heard a voice.

“…Wu. It seems to be more troublesome than I thought it would be. How tiresome.”

Sion looked towards the source of the voice.

A man with an interested expression stood behind the girl. It was not known how long he had been standing there.

He was a blond man and his beauty attracted the envy of others.

He was the Head of the Eris Family, who had the ancestral duty of serving the King of the Roland kingdom, Lucile Eris.

Therefore, in order for him to fulfill his role as Sion Astal’s protector, he immediately attacked the monster that had placed Sion in danger.

“… But, if you need my power to deal with this kind of lowly creature, then you have no future. Won’t you work harder? Sion?”

What was happening? Why would he said something like this?

At this moment, Sion was fighting against the invasion of the monster. He looked at Lucile.

“…Gu gu, wu. Wa… This, this is bad.”

“Is it?”

“Eh.”

“Then you can die first.”

“I said. That was what I told the monster.”

“Ha ha. Really?”

“Ah ah.”

“I see. Then work hard. If you can’t deal with this standard, then you have nothing worth my protection.”

“…”

Sion thought that what the unpleasant character said made sense.

Yes, the enemy in front of him was not suited to be his enemy.

In these few months, Sion had constantly encountered their enemies—if it was not the creatures that called themselves Goddesses, it was monsters from outside their habitat.

The opponent Sion was facing was a copy of a Goddess. They only needed to use a part of their body as a medium. From there, many monsters could be created. Moreover, the real body of the Goddess was not here. If his battle with this copy took up much effort, then it would be unacceptable.

Thinking of this, Sion concentrated.

He started to build the curse in his body.

The curse that was created for the sake of destroying the Goddess.

His concentration increased and the Curse of the Mad Hero started to progress quickly. Then he spoke like he was casting a spell, "… Get out of my sight, Goddess."

In a second, many black swords appeared around Sion.

They were so black that they seemed to absorb the darkness.

They were so black that they seemed to eat the darkness.

They were darker than black.

Looking at these swords, the monster that was preparing to eat Sion became desperate.

"Wait…Wait—"

Without waiting for her to finish speaking, the swords plunged towards it.

They pierced through the monster's body slowly and agonizingly.

The areas that the swords pierced became more transparent and colour began to fade from its body. Finally, it disappeared.

The cries of the monster had yet to be unleashed when the curse devoured it.

Then everything finally…

“…”

Finally, there was calm.

The monster had been eliminated. Sion double-confirmed it.

“…Wu…”

Groaning softly, Sion kneeled on the ground.

He was tortured by the sensations of being burned.

But this pain did not originate from the monster’s attack.

It was because he had used a power that he had no wish to use.

It was the after-effects of using the curse of the Mad Hero.

Sion felt as if he was being corroded away by the curse of the Mad Hero. His human personality was slowly fading away.

That heart-wrenching pain was displayed on his face.

“… Thanks, I can depend-”

The pain reached its peak.

But Lucile smiled at him and said something strange, “You did well.”

Sion suppressed his pain and forced himself to laugh.

“… What is that? If it’s a word of thanks, then should you convey it that way?

Really, saying this kind of things to comfort children.”

“Is that so?”

“Ah ah.”

“I see. Then do you wish to praised next time?”

Sion raised his head, his tense face carrying an expression of pain and stood up.

“…No, I’m not doing this for the sake of praise.”

His whole body hurt, as if it were about to fall apart. Aside from this, Sion felt a part of his most precious feelings and important memories had been lost.

Of course, he did not think that this was because of who had praised him.

This was something he had to do and only he could do. It was just like that.

Lucile said. “But if I don’t praise you now, then there will be no one else to praise you. Wouldn’t you be lonely?”

Sion replied, “… Don’t say such silly stuff.” He smiled faintly.

He looked at his surroundings and checked the condition of his body.

“…”

What an amazing place.

There was a blood-red ground and a white sky with nothing in sight.

A world with only red and white.

There was no noise.

There was no light.

Only this world that was red and white.

It was a world beyond human comprehension.

If one spent too much time in this place, they would go mad.

No, even if they stayed here for an hour, they would go mad too.

“…”

What am I thinking, he thought as he touched his chest and felt his remaining humanity.

He smiled sadly, as if mocking himself.

“… Then we should return, Lucile.”

As he said that, Lucile’s figure disappeared. Like usual, he only appeared when he wanted to, and disappeared when he wanted to.

Sion forced a smile upon his surprised face before he closed his eyes.

The red and white world that belonged to him disappeared.

The ugly world that the Goddesses made faded out as well.

He opened his eyes again.

“…”

The world had regained its usual scenery.

He could see the capital of the Roland kingdom before his eyes. He was sitting beside his throne. Sion could sit on the respected chair that only the loneliest person could sit on.

“…”

But when he sat on the throne, he could see the similarities between this scenery and the gory world that the Goddesses had created.

He could only see pain, despair and darkness.

Killing family, betraying friends and offering his body as a sacrifice. After experiencing this, he had finally managed to get to the position he held today.

“…”

So he could see the decaying scenery.

The Mad Hero’s laughter.

The voices of grotesque Goddesses and uncomprehending humans.

Sion would be tortured by these voices and he would thinking of crying.

When he was alone, he felt like crying.

His personality was slowly disappearing.

His rationality was slowly fading.

This was bad.

Terrible.

“… so lonely.” He muttered softly.

He leaned into his chair and watched the crimson rays of dusk shine through the window.

“…”

In the past, there were people who would stay by his side and relieve his boredom.

It was a long time ago. Every time Sion said he was lonely, Ryner would blurt,

“Huh? Haaaaaa. You dare say that you’re lonely when you ordered me to stay by your side? You’re kidding. What kind of joke are you trying to pull off? If you don’t want me to die, then let me leave. I don’t even have the strength to yell “Aaaahhhh”. So, can I leave now?”

Ferris, who was sitting to one side, said, “Wu, hearing you say this, I feel a little lonely too. Let’s go buy dangos together.”

Although this was a strange conversation, Sion still felt happy when he heard this.

“…”

Thinking about that piece of happiness he had enjoyed not too long ago, Sion smiled sadly again.

“…”

But those days of happiness would never return.

When the colours of the world changed, they could no longer return to their original colours.

Every time he thought of this, he always.

Always.

“… This really makes one feel lonely, Ryner.” Sion murmured.

Even so, he would continue to progress.

Sion would work hard so that if the cogwheels of fate started to veer into a hopeless future, his actions would at least hinder the developments of this future and lighten the impact. He struggled desperately. As a result, he had no more time to rest.

If he stopped, the whole world would be thrown into chaos.

So he breathed in and destroyed his weaknesses. He destroyed the weakness he had of reminiscing the past and wallowing in pointless angst.

There was already no more time.

He had no time to recall the past.

So he thought that he'd put his efforts into progressing into his future.

Killing his biological father, betraying his friend, abandoning his humanity—this was all for the sake of progress. He lifted his head again— "…"

Sion turned to see a girl standing in the hall. It was not known how long she had been standing there.

In that moment, he thought that it had come again.

The monsters released by the Goddesses.

Lately, the *Goddesses* had been increasing the frequency of their attacks.

From the human world or from the Other Side.

Although the monsters created in the human world were weaker than the monsters created in the Other Side, but the assassins that the Goddesses sent had a power that was more than what a human would have.

So Sion tensed, ready for battle.

But when the girl walked in, he relaxed.

He knew this girl.

"…"

He watched the girl who had entered the Hall.

She was younger than Sion by around two or three years. She was sixteen years old.

A wavy, amber pony tail and large eyes. She wore the Roland army uniform that did not match with her petite body.

Sion recognized that appearance.

Milk Callaud.

That was her name.

Sion had used this girl to make sure that Ryner would stay by his side.

This girl was Ryner's childhood friend.

The girl stood in front of him currently.

Sion looked at her. Then he erased the roiling darkness in his body. He erased the pain, hopelessness and sadness that was released from the Mad Hero from his body.

Then he gave her a fake smile, "… Isn't this Lieutenant Milk Callaud? It's been a long time since we met. Is there anything I can do for you?"

For unknown reasons, Milk looked at him with a slightly serious expression. "…

There's something I'd like to ask Your Majesty."

That adorable voice carried an undercurrent of solemnity.

Sion replied, "…Some things? What is it?"

Although he phrased it that way, he understood why she was here.

The reason why she was here.

She was here to ask about what was happening in this country.

She was here to ask what had happened to the world.

She was here to ask about the country that had launched war on the world.

She wanted to ask Sion Astal, who was the Hero King and supposedly a good man, why he had continued with the human experiments secretly; and the reasons for the invasion of other countries as well as why he had betrayed his friend.

"…"

Was Ryner Lute a traitor?

Milk was here to ask this.

This was the first person to save Ryner.

This was the first person to stop Ryner's Alpha Stigma from going berserk.

This person was the childhood friend of Ryner but she did not follow him and came here instead.

For Ryner.

For the sake of helping him out.

She clearly wanted to leave with Ryner, but she came here—

Came here to keep an eye on the man that had betrayed Ryner.

"…"

Sion could withstand the accusing look Milk was aiming at him.

He could withstand her feelings.

For a moment, there was a slight pain deep in his chest.

But it was only for a moment.

Sion smiled warmly immediately, "If you have any questions, you can ask them."

So she continued in a determined tone. "No, there aren't so many problems. I just wanted to ask one thing."

A straight-forward tone.

It was different from his first impression of her when they first met.

It was noticeably different from his impression of her when he first thought to make use of her.

Then, she gave him the impression of being adorable and inexperienced, but now he could feel the intensity of her thoughts.

She was determined to change something.

Anyone who wanted to save something had a similar expression.

She had decided on something and came here with that strong determination.

He could feel it, just by looking at her expression.

"…"

But towards this.

Sion felt that it was meaningless.

No, interrogating Sion now was really meaningless, he thought.

She would interrogate Sion and get some information from him and pass it on to him, or for Ryner's benefit, she would persuade Sion.

No matter which side…

"…"

Everything seemed to be foolish, to Sion.

It was too late.

It was too late because all the saddening events had already occurred.

Even Ryner's and Sion's relationship.

Even Sion's relationship with the world.

It was already at a stage where the darkness was overwhelming and there was no hope for any chances of redemption.

Then, suddenly.

"…"

Sion felt the darkness in his body ache. He felt the pain stab through his body, the Curse of the Mad Hero was starting again.

He couldn't help but scrunch his face.

This was bad, he wanted to softly groan.

That was starting again.

In another universe different from their world, the *Mad Hero* and the *Goddesses* were starting their ugly battle between each other.

In that moment.

The scene distorted.

The entrance to the Hall where Milk Callaud was standing—this image.

A dark corridor where a subordinate of the Goddesses stood—that image.

The two images overlapped each other so that they would both be seen at the same time.

The different images started to move. He thought furiously of ideas to deal with both sides, and felt nauseous and dizzy.

This was the after-effect of using the curse of the Mad Hero.

Sion had to exist in both worlds and then react to both situations at the same time.

The real world and the Other World.

“…”

In the dark corridor.

The subordinate of the Goddesses started to shake its head with a gurgling sound.

Gu lu gu lu, gu lu gu lu, it started to shake as if it were mad.

Then it walked towards him.

<<Kiiill hiiim kiiilll hiiim kiiillll hiiiim kiiilll hiiim!!!!!>> It shouted as if got nearer.

Its hair swung in his direction.

Her surroundings would decompose as she walked past. It chased after him, emanating a foul stench and decaying.

He only needed to look at it to understand that this monster was stronger than its predecessor. It was very obvious that its nature was far more vile than the previous one.

If he didn’t deal with it immediately, he would be killed.

It he didn’t deal with it immediately, the world would be eliminated.

“…”

But towards this, Sion’s expression remained calm.

He was already accustomed to this kind of situation.

“Lucile.”

Sion, who was in the Other World, said to the human world.

Then, in front of him…

A blond, beautiful man appeared in the middle of the dark corridor.

He turned towards Sion.

“…Ah ah, alright. I shall devour this fellow. So you can be that cute girl’s opponent.”

He nodded towards Sion.

In the next second, Lucile disappeared and the monster’s head was retrieved.

Then the monster that had lost its head,

<<Don’t, don’t interfere, Lucile Eris! You-you-What you’re doing is insane…>> But Sion ignored that voice.

He ignored the images of the Other World.

Then, as if nothing had happened, he smiled. As if nothing had happened, he smiled warmly.

But in truth, nothing had happened in the real world.

Even if it was a large magical attack.

Even if the mad Goddesses caused trouble.

For now, that power was unable to interfere in the affairs of this world.

Though it was only for now.

“…”

Because of that, he pretended that nothing had happened.

He smiled warmly as he looked at the girl before him.

Then.

“… Then, I’ll listen to your question now.”

He said.

Therefore, Milk could ask what she wanted to ask. It was probably the boring question that Sion had predicted.

What happened to you and Ryner?

What has happened to our country?

This kind of question, compared to the current situation and the depressing script, was able to make one laugh foolishly but happily.

Towards Sion who felt like crying and was invaded by the *Mad Hero* and the *Goddesses*, this was a simple trouble made him feel like laughing.

Towards this kind of question, Sion had many answers and excuses prepared.

He only needed to choose one from these, an answer that could she could accept and feel at ease.

There was no need to tell her the truth.

There was no need to tell her the despair in this world.

Only he was needed to sink into that despair.

"…"

So Sion smiled, watching Milk.

He smiled that usual, calm and youthful smile and watched Milk.

Then said, "Ah, ask away."

So Milk nodded her head and thanked him. Her round, big eyes looked straight at him as she asked, "… What has happened to this country?"

This… She had asked the question that Sion had predicted…

But at this moment.

She continued. "I wanted to ask Your Majesty this. And about Ryner… What has happened between Your Majesty and him? I wanted to ask Your Majesty this. But after seeing Your Majesty… After seeing you, I understood that it was meaningless to ask that. So I decided to ask something else."

She suddenly said this.

Sion narrowed his eyes at this.

"… Another question?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

So she asked.

Her face appeared to be a little worried, although Sion did not know why.

“…Your Majesty, what are you fighting with?”

She said.

What she wasn’t looking at Sion.

She was looking at Sion’s chest.

As if she wanted to look into his inner mind, she looked at Sion’s chest.

Sion looked at his chest.

But there was nothing there. There was nothing particularly eye-catching.

But Milk kept looking at his chest. As if she could see through Sion’s chest. She looked at Sion’s chest seriously.

An expression as if she could see something Sion couldn’t see.

No, that was not right.

It was an expression as if she was able to see another world that only Sion could see.

He felt a little nervous at this.

“…What are you saying?” he asked.

But towards this,

“…” Milk did not reply.

She only looked at Sion’s chest. She looked towards him with that expression as if she was so scared that she was about to cry.

“Miss Milk?” Sion said.

“…”

“About that, what’s wrong?”

“…”

“Eh…”

Sion stopped speaking.

Because Milk’s body seemed to lose strength and collapsed.

“What-” Sion exclaimed in surprise.

For unknown reasons, Milk seemed to lose consciousness and her head was about to collide with the floor…

“Danger-”

Sion stood up from his throne. He ran towards the Hall. Although it was clear he would not reach her in time, but he still rushed forward.

But when Milk’s head was about to strike the floor.

“…”

Her body was supported by someone.

Outside the Hall.

A man appeared from behind Milk, gently carrying her.

“…”

Sion stopped then looked at the man who was carrying Milk.

Although he was still quite young, he had long white hair. He had a gentle and experienced expression. He wore the Roland Army uniform.

Sion recognized this man.

Sergeant Luke Stokkart.

He always had a smiling, calm expression. He was a man who was as gentle as a nursery teacher and who followed Milk. But he was a man who had helped Sion secretly during the revolution. He was like Rahel Miller’s right-hand man.

The right-hand man of Miller came here.

No, ah, it was possible that it was this man who brought Milk here.

After all, only a small number of people were able to enter this Hall.

Only an exceedingly small number of people were able to approach this Hall that would be under attack from the Goddessess any time. These people were prepared to face anything odd from this Hall.

He had also placed security measures around this Hall.

And Milk Callaud was not on his approval list.

So she would be unable to get here alone.

That meant, "…It was you who brought her here? Luke."

Luke raised his head when he heard Sion's question. He still had a warm, smiling and calm expression. But if he was tricked by that face, he would suffer greatly, Sion understood that.

This man was the hardest to command amongst Sion's subordinates. From the time they had met until now, it had always been the same.

His performance during the revolution was equal to Claugh Klom and Rahel Miller… No, this man was better, but he would never appear on the stage.

He would always be backstage, carrying out top-secret missions and sneakily executing them. He seemed to smile happily, but he was always able to make things proceed his way.

It was impossible to guess his thoughts just by looking at him.

He was a man who was intellectual and powerful but it was incomprehensible why this man would decide to follow Sion and Miller.

Ah, on this point, Claugh who had some dealings with Luke had said, "No, that man is not thinking of anything. He's just someone who is competitive but has a strong sense of justice which is worthless. He is an idiot who just wants to do what he thinks is right. So that guy just simply wants to follow you. There's no need to worry about something strange."

That was what he had said.

But.

"…"

Sion looked at Luke.

As expected, this man had a calm, cheerful but unfathomable smile. Sion tried to guess at what he was thinking but he gave up quickly.

He didn't understand the reason why Luke had brought Milk to see him.

So Sion asked honestly, "… What have you come here for?"

Luke's eyes were creased because he was smiling. He turned to Sion, "What

have I come here for; what a cold attitude. Because I haven't seen Sion recently, I decided to come and pay a visit… Did I interrupt you?"

Sion wrinkled his brow when he heard this. "No… but why did you specially take Milk Callaud along with you?"

"Is it strange? Captain Milk is my direct superior. I just wanted to come with my superior to greet fawn over Your Majesty, that's all." Luke said.

Sion wanted to laugh at this.

Greet?

Fawn over?

That, Luke Stokkart?

If there was no need, if the man himself felt that there was no need for himself to appear, come to greet Sion only?

Really, it made one want to laugh.

Sion looked at Luke who was lowering Milk to the ground and said, "… Ma, jokes aside, what are you here to inquire about?"

Luke still smiled, "Wu ah, Sion is as straight-forward as ever. But there's nothing we wish to inquire about. Speaking of which, you don't mean to not answer the question even though it's already been asked? The world has changed. You have become the king. A perfect king that is well-liked by the people. What complains would I have?"

Towards this, Sion laughed, "Don't speak nonsense."

But Luke still had an indifferent expression. "No, no, this isn't nonsense. It's the truth. But, ma, I feel that the problem is that you have too many secrets… Ma, forget about that. There's no human who has no secrets."

Towards this, Sion looked at Luke and said, "… That's strange. What secret do I have that, even you, are unable to understand?"

"Is it like this?"

"Yes. And, about what is happening to my body, I have already told that to Miller. About The Hero. About the Goddesses. I have told Miller about all of this

and he is understood. So about this you…”

Luke nodded.

“I heard it too.”

“Then what other problems are there? What have you come here for?”

Luke laughed at Sion’s question.

“I don’t believe a topic that has been passed on by someone else.”

“Eh? So you’re saying that unless I tell you directly, you wouldn’t accept it?”

But Luke shook his head.

“Your words can’t be trusted. I, I only trust what I can see.”

Sion felt a little troubled by these words.

“...You, You’re a troublesome person.”

Luke laughed, “That’s not the case, right? If it’s left alone, everything will end by itself…”

Saying this, he gently let Milk rest on the ground. Then he stood up. Raising his head, he turned to Sion.

Looking at Luke’s face, Sion said.

“It is troubling if everything is messed up.”

“It wouldn’t be too troublesome.”

“Huh. Ma, there isn’t anything much… Eh, then what are you here for?”

Luke still smiled even after Sion asked that.

“… I came to give a small test.”

“Test?”

“Ai ai. I came to test you.”

“Test me?”

Luke nodded. Then he spread his hands with a I’ll-explain-to-you expression and started to speak.

“The king of the largest country in the southern continent, the young Hero King of Roland Kingdom, Sion Astal. Gentle, clever-really, you are a monarch who has saved the country and praised by everyone. But suddenly you declared war on other countries. You even secretly continued the human experiments and carry secrets that many of your subordinates do not know of. Then, what has happened to the young Sion? Or have you become mad, like your foolish father, drowning in your power? For this…”

Sion smiled when Luke said this.

“You’re here to test me?”

Luke nodded his head. “Yes.”

“Eh. But how am I to be tested?”

Sion asked this, but Luke shrugged.

“No, like I said, I have already tested you. And I felt that you are a wonderful king, although you have too many secrets but that is fine.”

Sion tilted his head when Luke said this.

“Wu? Already tested? When was that…”

Luke looked at the sleeping Milk and said. “Didn’t Sion frantically try to help Captain Milk who was dizzy because of my actions? Since you can reveal that kind of expression, then I can be at ease now. And you still possessed a degree of humanity that was beyond my expectations.”

Sion’s face tensed when he heard this.

When Milk first appeared until now, all this was the test that Luke had carried out. It seemed as if he had passed that test.

About the results of the test, Luke had said. “And you still possessed a degree of humanity that was beyond my expectations.”

He still had his humanity. That was what Luke had said.

But towards this, Sion muttered.

“… A boring farce.”

Luke nodded. “Yes. But it was an important matter to me. As someone who is

commanded, I have to carefully choose the people who I follow…”

“Then, because I still have my humanity, you will follow me?”

“Yes.”

“Really, that makes me feel touched. But what does this tell me about the man who knocked out his own superior to test me?”

Sion said this. Luke revealed a slightly sad expression,

“… No, there is a reason for that… but what that reveals is confidential.”

Sion exclaimed, “What does that mean? Don’t you have your own secrets too?”

Luke resumed smiling and said, “I do not matter. I was originally the doctrine of secrets.”

“That’s despicable.”

“Ahaha. I specialize in being despicable.”

Luke laughed as he spoke.

Then he observed his surroundings.

He could only see Sion, himself and Milk in the Hall.

Then.

“Ah, he… the monster near you—Lucile Eris-san is here too?”

Luke asked.

“…”

Sion was already frustrated.

Whenever he spoke with this man, he would feel a genuine feeling of exhaustion.

How many secrets did Luke know, what kind of plan was he coming up with; he could not completely predict Luke. If he was unable to predict Luke’s thoughts, he would be unable to respond to Luke.

So Sion did not want to become enemies with this man.

Even more than Claugh and Miller.

He had to make this man his ally.

Humans.

This man was the most dangerous character amongst the humans—because Sion truly thought like this.

So he looked at Luke and said, "… Really, what have you come here for? If you have anything to ask, you can ask it directly. I will answer your questions."

But Luke assumed a calm expression, " So I told you I would not believe everything that you have said about yourself."

Sion really felt frustrated when he heard this.

"Ah ah, you are such a troublesome man. Then Miller shall explain everything to you. I have told him everything . After that, he understood. No, so that he could understand, I told him everything. Which means that I have no more secrets that you can exploit."

Sion said.

Yes.

He had told Miller most of his secrets.

He remembered that he had told Miller about now, Roland, the world, the situation Sion was in and that depressing script.

His description of the context had been something like this.

About this world, there was an inhuman, greedy existence called

the Goddesses that wanted to consume everything.

As the Goddesses maintained their greedy and ruthless methods, they violated and caused a shortage of food in the world. It planned to bring the world to its demise.

There was another inhuman existence called the mad Hero who destroyed these Goddesses.

But in order to destroy the Goddesses, the power of that mad Hero was

needed. So Sion had accepted that power.

However, if one wanted to use the Mad Hero's power to destroy

the Goddesses, then the barrier in this world that had been created by the Goddesses had to be destroyed.

The worst thing was that the barrier that the Goddesses had erected was actually the ' *Humans*' living on the Menoris Continent.

That meant that every organism that was named human, was a magical power created by the Goddesses to seal the Mad Hero.

But only the blood of the royal family of the Roland Empire was not that of the

' *Human*' that the Goddesses had created. Instead, the Mad Hero had created a different magical power that could break the Goddesses' barrier, *Human α*.

And the curse of Human α could over-rule the ' *Human*' and transform others.

That meant that before the rule of the king of Roland who had the blood of *'Human α'*, all of the people in Roland were no longer ' *Human*', but were transformed by the curse of ' *Human α*'.

The citizens of Estabul who had been conquered by Roland had been

transformed by ' *Human α*'.

Moreover, the people of Imperial Nelpha and Runa Empire that had been invaded by King Sion, who was born with ' *Human α*' were slowly becoming not ' *Human*'.

As ' *Human*' decreased, the barrier of the Goddesses would weaken.

If the barrier became weaker, the power of the Mad Hero would become stronger.

When that power reached the west side of the central Menoris Continent.

That meant that when the Roland territory had expanded to the west side of the central Menoris Continent—opposite the desert where humans were unable to live for long. When the world where the Goddesses lived in would become Roland territory where ' *Human α*' lived on—Sion would be able to kill all of the Goddesses, that would be gratifying.

Sion had told Miller this completely ridiculous, insane nonsense.

But Miller had believed him.

Because he had seen it.

The grotesque, ferocious appearance of the Goddesses.

And the mountain of corpses that were Sion's subordinates that had been eaten and ripped apart by the Goddess.

Even so, the Goddess had been unsatisfied.

It yelled that it had was not enough, not enough, it hadn't eaten enough.

It had yelled crazily.

Miller had seen that horrible form.

So he understood.

Then he confirmed that he would cooperate with Sion to the best of his abilities.

He had confirmed that he would lend his strength to Sion so that the Goddesses would be exterminated.

As Miller's most capable subordinate, Luke should have heard this before.

But this man came here. He had came here to exploit Sion's secrets.

Of course, without visual evidence and this nonsense was passed on from someone else, it would be hard for someone to believe him, this much was clear…

At this moment.

"I did believe it."

As if he were peeking at Sion's thoughts, Luke said. Then,

"The things that Miller-sama showed to me. And what you said to him, about the Goddess and the Hero. I did believe it. You wouldn't tell him lies."

Luke said.

Sion looked at Luke with a surprised expression and said. "… Then what was

there to inquire? For what purpose did you come here…”

But Luke interrupted Sion. He opened his eyes that had been creased into slits because of his smile, ‘…But the possible truth that you told Miller-sama takes up how much of your secrets? Twenty percent? Thirty percent? When what is the rest of the seventy percent? If we only look at one part, only look at a tiny portion of what seems true… Ah, then what would happen if it becomes an entirely different story after we see the whole truth? Because this kind of situation happens often. So I came here on Miller-sama’s behalf to investigate this…. That is my job.”

Saying this, Luke looked towards Sion.

Even though he was smiling, but his eyes were very sharp and keen as they probed for the truth.

Towards this. “…”

Sion couldn’t help but smile.

No matter how Luke tried to search for that truth, it was a truth that could not be completely attained, anyway.

Yes, what he had told Miller was not the whole truth.

What he had told Miller about the Goddesses and the Hero was not complete.

No, towards this, the legend of the Goddesses and the Hero, even Sion who was personally involved had some parts that he could not understand.

The sources of the legend were different so the context of each ‘truth’ was different.

There was a version of the Goddesses going crazy and there was a version of the Hero going crazy.

Ma, no matter which side had gone crazy—Sion thought that anything was possible now.

No matter what, he only had to concentrate on the things that he could do.

Regardless of who it was, even if it was a mistake, he could only do what he was able to do.

So he had already made a choice.

Sion Astal had already made a choice.

He had chosen the road that he had thought most suitable.

He made the choice to kill his biological father, betray his best friend and sacrifice his own life for the sake of progress.

So he could let Luke do this.

If there was any other ‘truths’, if he thought there were other appropriate routes, then he could go and find them.

So Sion said.

He smiled and said to Luke. “…Ma, it’s your decision. No matter how you struggle, the ending will always be the same.”

Luke smiled at this too. “Ah ah, I will do that. How about I say… I have already done that. Preparation for another experiment…”

Towards this, Sion asked, “…Experiment?”

In the next second.

There was a whooshing sound. Then he felt as if an invisible thin thread entangled his head.

He wanted to slide his finger between his head and the thread, but it was too late.

“Gu.”

He released a soft sound, but his voice was cut off.

The thin thread encircled his neck tightly, making him unable to voice anything.

Luke pulled that thread. He had set up the thin thread in the Hall without Sion noticing.

Luke gently pulled on the head of the thread.

The thin line tightened.

“…”

He couldn’t release a sound.

Luke continued with an elated expression and said,

“Heh, then let the experiment begin~. Following this, I will kill you… Then the monster that protects you will come and kill me, right?”

Sion wanted to shout, ‘stop this!’ when he heard this. But he was unable to utter a sound. He was strangled too tightly and so he was unable to make a sound.

“…”

But even though it was like this, Sion still wanted to shout: stop this quickly, don’t do such a foolish thing. Or else that man, Lucile will, will come and kill you…

He wanted to shout this.

But he was unable to voice it.

This was bad, he thought.

It was not because he could feel himself dying.

This was really bad.

If this continued, Lucile would come out and kill Luke.

Luke was an important human towards this country.

He would fight against the Goddesses from today onwards.

He was a necessary character who would help to expand Roland’s territory the west of central Menoris Continent.

So Sion wanted to shout, ‘stop this, quick!’.

But he was unable to speak.

The thin line tightened and started to cut into the skin.

He would die, Sion though.

Then in that moment.

“…”

Suddenly.

“…”

Lucile did not appear.

Sion widened his eyes.

This was impossible.

It was impossible that Lucile did not appear.

So Sion looked at Luke with an expression of surprise.

Then Luke said.

“…Ah, looks like he wouldn’t appear. Then the first experiment was a success.”

Saying this, he gathered the line in his hands.

A whooshing sound followed and Sion was released. The thread of unknown design returned to Luke’s hands.

Sion coughed and heaved, recovering from his strangulation and then he stared at Luke.

“…What… what have you come to do?”

Luke shrugged his shoulders.

“That’s a secret.”

“…That thread, is it a Heroes’ Relic? How did you get it?”

“That’s also a secret.”

“Don’t kid me. Don’t think that because no one can figure out your secrets, you can ask about other people’s secrets.”

Luke laughed at what Sion said.

“…So I won’t ask you. I will exploit your secrets by myself…”

Saying this, he continued to stare at Sion. Luke laughed, a little troubled, then said,

“Even if this happened, the fact that I am your ally wouldn’t change. Like what I said, you’re a wonderful king. I believe that you are a heroic savior who will be

able to change this country and this world. But in order for that to be accomplished, I think I ought to help out a little. Ma, what I'ms doing now is a secret experiment, you'll know what it is soon. So you don't have to glare at me."

He said.

But Sion continued to glare at Luke,

"…"

As if he wanted to say something.

But he said nothing.

Because like what Luke had said, it would be soon.

He would know about the secret experiment that Luke was carrying out.

Like what he had said, Sion would soon understand the contents of that experiment.

That was, with the scene that Sion was looking at, something else that would happen in a different place.

In a different place from the Hall that Sion, Luke and the unconscious Milk were in.

Human world, the Other World.

In the Other World where Lucile was supposed to be destroying the monster released by the Goddess, that had happened.

Sion turned his attention back there.

Sion was standing in the dark corridor.

Not far from him was the corpse of a strange body.

It was the corpse that the Goddess had released to kill him.

It should have been thrown there after Lucile had killed it.

But when monsters died, they would disappear from this world.

This was the space created by the monster, so when its master had disappeared, this world would immediately collapse and disappear.

But this world continued to exist.

Its creator had died, but it had not collapsed.

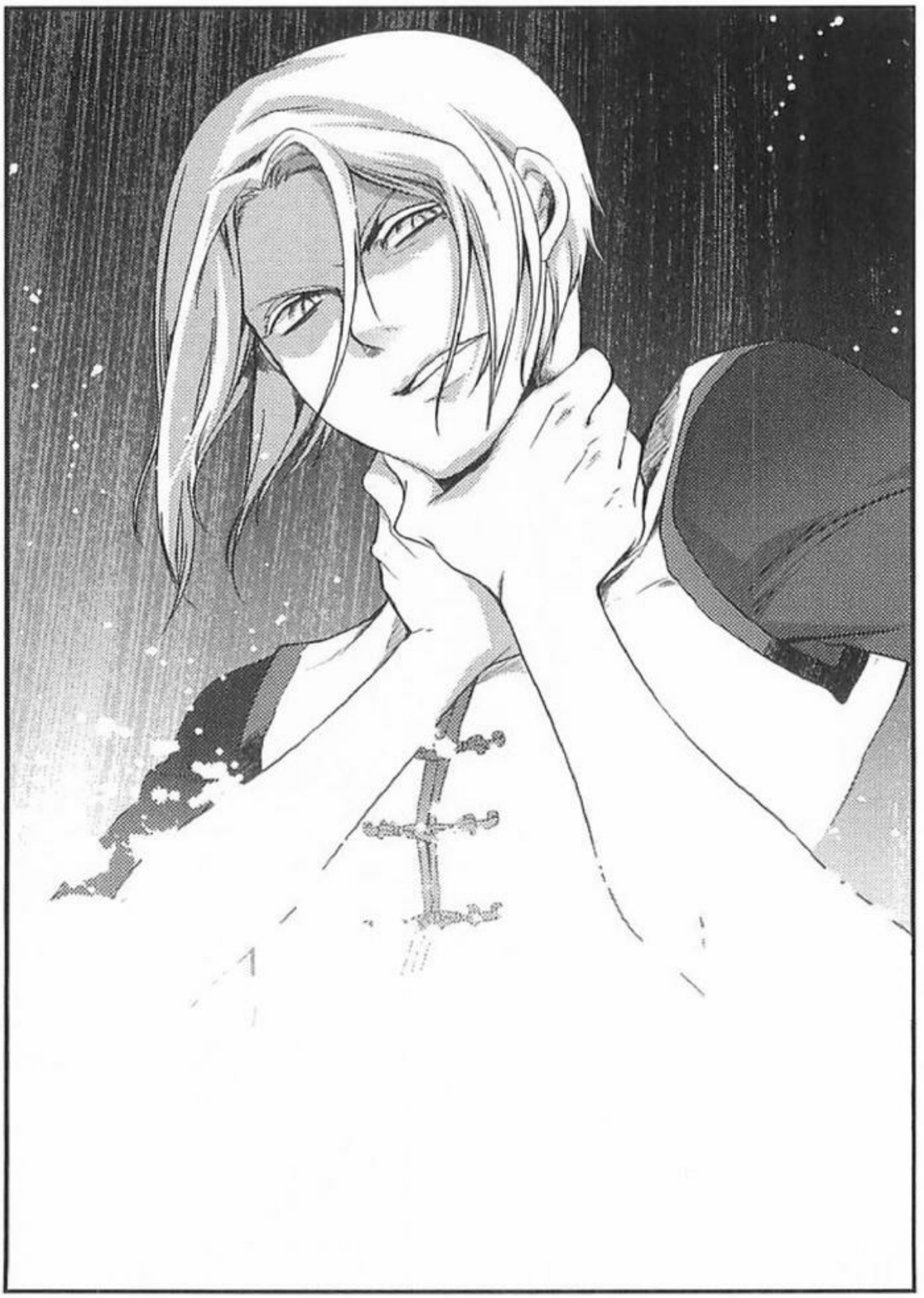
This meant that there was the existence of a magical creature.

It could be another monster that had taken over the control of this world or the Goddess.

No, unless it was Lucile who had decided to maintain this place for some reason…

"…"

Although he thought of that, this view immediately disappeared.



Because Lucile was further ahead in the dark corridor.

And Lucile.

That Lucile Eris was pinned against the black wall of the corridor by his neck.

Lucile looked to him, an expression of pain that did not belong on his face.

He uttered, “Don’t come over, Sion…”

But he could only speak until here. Because the grip around his throat had tightened.

“Sha, ah… wu.”

Lucile moaned.

Sion was unable to move.

That Lucile was pinned down by a power.

That Lucile bordered on being killed.

Under these circumstances, Sion was helpless.

But the events were progressing.

The person strangling Lucile turned around.

Seeing that appearance, that person’s identity was easy to figure out.

“Is it the real… real, Goddess…”

Sion muttered dumbly.

The Goddess smiled.

Dazzling hair that was coloured with the colours of the rainbow and beautiful eyes. It was as if all the beauty in the world was coalesced into that single being.

Sion’s gaze was fixed on that extraordinary beauty.

He was captivated by her.

Then the beautiful woman spoke. She used that beautiful and adorable voice that could charm anyone, “Ah ah, Sion Astal, you still continue to move forward.”

Even though he was gripped by the throat, Lucile still managed to say,

“Do, Don’t listen, Sion… this person, has the magic to brain-wash…”

But the Goddess looked at Lucile and said:

“I won’t use magic on you, Lucile Eris, only I stand on your side… I am the only woman who loves you… Have you forgotten even this?”

“Shut up, mad Goddess…”

Upon hearing what Lucile said, the Goddess’s expression became sad and lonely, as if she were about to cry.

When Sion saw this expression, he wanted to walk over and let her depend on him.

He wanted to walk over and hug her.

No, that was not right.

It was something in his body that wanted her.

It was the something in his body—it had to be the power of Asruld Roland, the Mad Hero, that strongly, very strongly wanted her.

Wanted her.

Wanted to hug her.

The curse in his body was shrieking to obtain all of her.

But Sion did not move.

He frantically tried to control his movements and suppressed the power in his body.

Because that woman.

That Goddess was a woman he couldn’t touch. So Sion frantically tried to withstand the urge.

He frantically controlled the urge that swelled within him.

He frantically suppressed the shrieks of the mad hero in his body.

He roared ‘Shut up!’ to the voice that shrieked ‘Hug her!’

He roared ‘Shut up!’ to the voice that shrieked ‘Own her!’

Then he looked.

He looked in the direction of the Goddess.

She was so beautiful.

He looked at the beautiful Goddess who had almost the same features of Milk Callaud.

“Darn it,” Sion muttered.

Then the Goddess smiled and said, “Is it painful? Asruld Roland.”

She asked.

She approached Sion.

Sion’s features twisted. He frantically tried to suppress the overwhelming desire to ‘hug her, own her’.

Then he said, “Don’t come near, monster. If…if you come nearer, I…I…”

But the Goddess with Milk’s face said, “You can hug me, you can possess me, that is all that I exist for.”

Sion glared at the Goddess, “What… are you?”

It was obvious that she wasn’t a normal Goddess. He could tell this from the moment he had seen her.

Because that unknown power in his body had reacted excessively to this woman.

The mad hero in his body, Asruld Roland, had reacted differently to her than how he had reacted to the other fragments of the Goddesses.

So Sion was questioning the woman in front of him. He stared at this monster that had almost the same features as Milk Callaud.

“What exactly are you?”

The woman smiled again.

“You already know the answer, don’t you? You know it in your heart. How did you feel when you saw me? Why don’t you follow that feeling…”

Suddenly she stopped talking.

Then she faced the sky.

In that space where the monster had created the dark corridor.

Following her movements, a big hole appeared above the corridor. On the other side of the hole appeared another dimension.

She silently looked there, watching the hole above the corridor.

Suddenly, her expression morphed to one of sadness and she said, “Ah ah, the demon that you released has now met with the Goddess of Unsurpassed Vileness . *To us, this is not a good development. This way, Alpha will disappear and the shackles containing the Solver of All Equations'* will be lessened. This should have been done by you, Asruld Roland.”

The woman said.

She said that the Solver of All Equations and the Goddess of Unsurpassed Vileness had met.

Sion asked, “Are you… Are you referring to Ryner?”

“… Yes. Yes, it’s like that. Ryner whom I love. The Lonely Demon whom I love.

Because you didn’t quickly catch his heart, he has landed into the hands of the ugly Goddess. I did help you. I was always mesmerized by the love between the both you. I was always mesmerized by the insane friendship between the two of you… But you always, always weren’t crazy for love. Ne, isn’t it, Eris Reed, the weakness your beloved hero has is disturbing, right?”

She asked Lucile who was pinned against the wall.

“But you are in the wrong too, Eris. No matter how you increase your powers, you aren’t the genuine article, not if you don’t become one with Ryner. That’s why you lost to me, that’s why you, the powerful demon lost to me…”

Lucile glared at the woman, “…That’s only for now. You can be smug but that’s only for now. I will gain the power to leave the script you have written.”

Hearing this, the woman was sad, “It was not written by me.”

“Shut up… shameless woman.”

“I can shut up, but this is the truth, Eris. I cannot interfere in this script, nor can the Goddesses. Truthfully, the ones who wrote this depressing script were

you.

Even if I say this, you wouldn't receive my message."

Then the woman released Lucile.

Lucile collapsed to the ground, weak.

She seemed to show no interest in Lucile and spread her hands, looking at Sion.

Then her voice turned lively, "But maybe it's because of that, that I like the both of you. Because of this, I like the both of you. Because of that very sad, too short and always unpredictable love… Let me help you. I will definitely kill those greedy Goddesses who love to cause trouble for you frequently. This time, in this world, I will help you so that the two of you will be able to be loved."

Saying this, she approached Sion.

She was approaching Sion.

The power in Sion's body reacted.

He could hear the wails of the mad hero in his body.

Hug her.

Hug her.

Possess her.

Possess this Goddess's power.

If he did this.

If he did this.

If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this.

If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this.

If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this.

If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did this. If he did

this.

He.

Ryner.

Maybe he wouldn't need to kill that beloved demon.

Maybe there was no need to kill him in order to change this decaying world that was poisoned by 'light'.

The hero yelled.

As if she could hear the hero's yells, the Goddess smiled.

"Come, hug me, Asruld. Come, hug me, Roland. Come, hug me, Sion Astal."

Hearing this.

Sion widened his eyes.

Staring.

Staring at that Goddess.

Staring at that Goddess of Reincarnation that was so alike Milk Callaud.

Then.

"If I hug you, what will you gain from it?"

The woman smiled, devastatingly beautiful.

"…"

She smiled, she didn't reply.

But Sion knew. Even though he didn't understand what she had told him, he knew.

What she would gain was the darkness.

That deep, inky, unfathomable darkness.

She was mesmerized by that darkness.

She was mesmerized by that deep darkness that could cause anyone to go mad.

In his body, the fragment of Asruld Roland stirred.

Wanted her.

Wanted her.

Wanted her.

But at the same time, the hero shouted:

She was scary.

She was scary.

That cheerfulness behind her smile was scary.

So he couldn’t touch her.

Wanted her.

Don’t touch her.

Want…

But that stopped.

“Shut up!!”

Sion shouted and struck his chest.

“Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! I will choose the path that I walk, so shut up, you monsters!”

Sion yelled.

Like this, the voices in his body stopped. The voice that desired this woman stopped. The mysterious voice that feared this woman stopped.

Then he could finally look at the monster in front of him calmly.

Look at the stunning beauty in front of him.

Look at the monster who had the face of Milk Callaud.

Sion asked, “Why do you imitate Milk Callaud’s appearance? Why do you use her face?”

Hearing this, she turned sad again, “Ah ah, you still won’t go mad… But that strong rationality will destroy your heart one day…”

“Anyway, just answer my question. Why do you use her face?”

Towards this, she replied, “This is my true appearance. For the sake of reincarnating into someone who you cannot harm, for the sake of reincarnating into someone who you will not harm if you don’t go mad—this is what I have done to myself—I am the one who made you fall, Sion. This is for the sake of freeing you from the mayhem, for the sake of letting you fall and become mad, for you to live, free from worry.”

Hearing this, Sion’s expression tensed.

“Then, from the beginning, Milk Callaud was…”

“Yes, she was me… but she was born as a human, so she had a human

personality…”

“Then Milk Callaud, she… she’s now…”

“She’s here. In me. And she’s looking at this right now. She’s frantically shouting ‘Save me, save me, Ryner’ because she does not want to be hugged by you. Unfortunately, you have to hug me. No matter what, you have to hug me. This is so that he can be saved. This is to save beloved Ryner.”

Saying this, she became more sad, as if she was about to cry. No, she really cried, tears cascading from her eyes.

She continued, “Ah ah, ah ah. How ironic. If you can be tempted by my power now, if I can force you to hug me… This chance has been lost. We have lost another chance again. Now you have the immunity, the immunity towards my power… This way, when you are forced to hug me after today… you will come and hug me of your own will. You will get me by your willpower and devastate me. That is too sad, too painful… Because you will cry when you hug me. You will cry, why is this world so insane. So I wanted you to hug me here because I don’t want you to be in even more pain…”

She sobbed and sobbed. Her tears evaporated and disappeared into the air.

Sion did not know if those tears were real.

But he knew the meaning of her words.

“…”

She was letting him make a decision.

Progress or run away.

Letting him make the decision.

She said, “It’s not too late, make me…”

But Sion shook his head.

“No.”

“But…”

“No, I won’t hug you. Even if I did not have your help, I would continue. Isn’t it like this?

Lucile.”

After he said this, Lucile stood up from where he had been at the Goddess’s feet. He raised a hand to wipe at the wound that the Goddess had left on him when she had pinned him to the wall. Then the wound disappeared, as if it had not been there.

But even so.

“…”

The wound in Lucile’s heart would not disappear.

It was still not enough.

He still did not have enough power to kill a genuine Goddess.

Even if he had devoured hundreds of divine creatures.

Even if he had devoured thousands of devils.

But it was still, still not enough.

Sion felt like that was depression.

Sion felt that was an endless depression.

Because it was proof that what they had done up until now was a meaningless struggle.

But even so.

"…"

A strong and confident smile appeared on Lucile's slightly tired face, and said, "I don't have any intentions to become the demon that I once was, Goddess of Reincarnation. If it is still not enough, I will continue to progress. If that's still not enough, then I will put in more effort in my progress. Even if means that I have to unleash everything forbidden, sacrifice my body, worship the soul… I will finally devour all of you."

He said and laughed.

It was an empty laugh.

It was a sad laugh.

The Goddess said with an expression as if she were about to cry, "But there is only destruction at the end."

Lucile laughed harder, "So what? So what? We have already decided. Sion and I… we have decided to step on this path. We will walk on this path without borrowing anyone's strength. It's just like what you said, Goddess of Reincarnation. The script is written by us. I… no, Sion Astal, the new hero who devoured the fragment of Asruld Roland will create it."

Hearing this, the expression of the Goddess changed. She widened her adorable eyes, "…What…Asruld… you have devoured him? What are you saying? How can, how can, a mere human, cannot possibly…"

Lucile laughed and continued, "It's impossible, it's impossible. Yes, anyone would think so. But is that right? Is that true? In fact you can feel it, can't you?

You can feel the faint presence of the Hero's consciousness; the power that the Hero is releasing is so weak. Why would such a strong magical presence be so quiet?"

She stared at them with a wavering expression, "Isn't, isn't he asleep…"

Lucile laughed.

"He's awake. He has always been awake for the past hundred years. He has caused every generation of the royal family to become mad… but now he doesn't have that power. He does not have that power to cause Sion to go mad.

Why do you think this is happening? Why would the Hero who has the power to destroy the world let people think that he is still sleeping?”

This question,

“…”

The Goddess was unable to respond.

She was unable to respond to this question.

“Sion is devouring him. Sion is devouring Asruld Roland’s power.”

“How can that…”

“Ha ha, ha ha ha ha ha, unbelievable? Isn’t it unbelievable? But this is the truth.

And everything has started. Everything has started, the script, the story.

Everything has started changing beyond your expectations.

Hearing this, the Goddess looked at them again and asked, “What…what has happened here? Asruld.”

Sion replied, “I am not Asruld Roland. I am Sion Astal.” Her expression became sad, it wasn’t the pitying expression she had earlier, but it was one of genuine sadness and depression.

“Is…is that so. You are really devouring Asruld.”

“Ah ah.”

“But whose power are you relying on? Just you… Just by you who are a human, it is impossible overwhelm Asruld. Whose power did you use to do this?”

Sion replied, “No. We did not use anyone’s power. It was Lucile who killed the people who were possessed by Asruld. He continued to kill, kill, kill, until he came to me.”

Lucile replied, “Yes. I chose the strongest person who could devour the Hero.

Sion is that person. That’s all. But because of this, everything will change. The destiny of the world, our destiny, and your destiny will change. Now, which side

will you stand on? There's no need for Ryner Lute to become the Lonely Demon. Sion, and I, will write the new script. Do you still want to join after that?"

The Goddess was silent for a moment, as if thinking about something, the sad expression still on her face.

But she quickly smiled that beautiful smile again, "Mere humans can actually struggle to this stage. Alright, I will stand on your side. I will look at the empty future that you will create.

But, but even if it is like that, I will make this prediction."

She reached out her hand, as if summoning, as if wanting to pull Sion over. She reached towards him and said, "What will wait for you at the end is despair.

What you wish for will never occur… You will beg me, you will say that you want to hug me, crying…"

"I won't."

"You will. But, that's fine. Now I will look at the future that you will be creating. I will help you for the sake of the future that you will create. The empty future that you desire—no devouring Ryner's life, no hugging my soul, no harming anyone—except for yourself, you will walk down that lonely, sad and foolish path so that no one else will be harmed. You can temporarily believe in it."

A smile appeared on her mesmerizing face.

A smile appeared on her attractive face.

It was so charismatic.

Sion felt that she was very charismatic.

He didn't know whether if that was the Mad Hero's feelings or his own feelings.

But he just felt like that.

"…"

This Goddess.

Milk Callaud was so beautiful.

Then the Goddess said, “Good bye.”

She disappeared. She vanished, leaving behind the dark corridor and the hole in the roof.

Leaving behind Lucile and Sion. Sion looked at Lucile. He looked at the beautiful man that was facing him.

He laughed and said, “Really, don’t lose in a place like this.”

Lucile turned his head to look at him and said, “…My apologies.”

That emotionless voice. It was an emotionless voice that was very alike to Ferris.

But in truth, that voice masked some feelings.

In that emotionless voice, there was anger, reluctance and despair.

Sion stared at this sad ‘ *Human*’ who had given up on being a human and said,

“Eh, forget it. You always put up with my weakness. You’re forgiven this time.”

Hearing this, Lucile looked at Sion in surprise.

“Ha, ha ha. What was that, two weak people licking their wounds for one another?”

Sion shrugged. “Yes. There’s only the two of us now. We have to reassure each other.”

“…”

“Because we are truly weak, so we have no choice. But next time it will be different, next time will be more…”

Lucile stopped Sion, “I know. Next time, I will do better. I won’t let you see something like what happened today.”

He said.

Sion looked at Lucile.

For the sake of not involving his little sister in the darkness.

For the sake of not involving his family in this despair.

For the sake of rescuing this country, this world from the hands of an irrational monster and giving up his humanity— This was the half of the over-friendly— so friendly that it made one sad—the Lonely Demon.

Looking at Lucile, Sion said, "…Ah ah, no problem. I trust you."

Lucile did not reply but smiled sadly.

"…"

He disappeared.

Then the world started to collapse.

The person who maintained this world had disappeared. His surroundings started to collapse.

Sion watched this by himself.

As the fallen mad hero eroded him.

He devoured the hero at the same time.

Sion watched the world collapse.

"…"

He closed his eyes.

Then the darkness became like the images surrounding him. In that moment, he felt like never waking up from the darkness.

Even if he opened his eyes, he would be facing another boring day.

Even if he opened his eyes, he would be facing a boring life.

But even so he could not continue to close his eyes.

He could not continue to close his eyes.

Because Man had to progress.

He could not stay in the same place.

So he opened his eyes.

Ryner and Ferris were no longer by his side. He himself would not become the human he once was.

Even so, he opened his eyes so that he could continue.

"…"

Then the images reverted to the original world.

The hall in the palace.

In this hall, there were two other people apart from him.

Luke and the still unconscious Milk Callaud.

Sion looked at Milk. He looked at her adorable sleeping face and turned his attention to the man who was hugging her.

That man, Luke looked in his direction and spoke. He was still smiling and gentle. "…It was a success. You have passed, Sion."

Sion creased his brows at this, "...Passed?" he asked.

Luke nodded. "Ai ai. You've passed."

"What are you talking about?"

"What am I talking about? Of course I'm talking about the experiment. After that, the second experiment was carried out. Then the result was that you passed."

"What are you saying…"

But Luke smiled, his eyes piercingly sharp, "…This kind of matter, aren't you the most clear about them? You resisted temptation. Until the end, you still didn't do anything to my captain." Luke said, as if he had witnessed the meeting of Sion and the Goddess of Reincarnation.

Sion frowned. "…What…"

But Luke interrupted Sion, as if seeing through his thoughts.

"… Ah, let me explain first, I didn't see where you were or what you encountered. I didn't see anything at all. Because I'm different from the three of you, I'm only a normal ordinary human… but what happened. I know what happened. So I said you—Sion passed. You didn't do anything to our captain and

continued to progress. But if you did something to Captain Milk, then you would meet your end."

Towards this, "…My end?" Sion asked in surprise.

Luke nodded. "Eh. It would have ended. Because a curse like this was applied."

Sion finally understood.

He finally understood what Luke had been doing.

That man had said curse. He had said so that the curse would be used.

But what curse was that? What was that curse that was able to kill that monster—the Hero?

"…"

Something like that did not exist.

Something like that could not be used by mere humans.

But this man had said it.

Luke had said it.

"Because a curse like this was applied."

So Sion finally understood.

Why this man would understand what had been happening.

Why this man was so confident in coming to meet with Sion and Lucile.

So Sion glared at Luke.

"… I see, so the one who has been controlling you is Lieral? Is Lieral Lieutolu controlling you?" He asked.

Lieral Lieutolu.

The man who had been a baron in the Roland Empire.

The man who had led the magical scholars of this country.

He was the man who had created the fundamentals of KUURI. He was the man who had created the fundamentals of RAGURU. He was the man who had constructed the majority of the magical spells used in this country.

Ever since he had became the leader of the researchers of magic, the magical structures of this country had developed rapidly.

He was a genius. He was a genius that other magic scholars could not understand.

Because he was an exceptional genius, he gained too much knowledge—in the end, he did the forbidden.

He had contacted something outside of this world.

The other side of the logical human world.

The Hero.

The Goddesses.

The Other World where the mad divinities resided in.

"…"

He had gone mad too.

He had desperately tried to save something that could not be saved.

He had desperately tried to save someone who could not be saved.

He had made his son, Felna, into the Demon (Ryner) so that his son could be saved. Because his son had the Alpha Stigma.

The contract had been signed.

That insane contract had immediately been signed.

Felna would not go mad and die of his Alpha Stigma. He would not suffer from the poison of the Alpha Stigma.

Because he had became the genuine article.

He had became the genuine despair.

Felna had became the Demon.

But even though he could escape from the violent death and curse of the Alpha Stigma, what awaited him was even more despair.

The Demon could become the prey of the Hero.

The Lonely Demon would become the prey of the Hero sooner or later.

Once he became the prey, he would fall into that prison forever. That prison where all the prey of the Hero went to.

But Lieral would not allow something like that to happen.

He would not allow something like that to happen.

So he had gone even more crazy.

He had done something forbidden again. He had sacrificed his wife to save his son and he was hunted down by the country. His son, Felna had disappeared.

Even the signs of him being in this country had been erased.

"…"

That was all Sion knew about him.

For the sake of saving his son, he was the man who had sacrificed the world and his wife.

"…"

Sion looked at Luke.

He looked at the man who was the subordinate of that crazy man and said, "…

Have you been possessed by that Roland spirit?"

But Luke shook his head. "No no, I'm not controlled by anyone. With him… I only made a deal with Baron Lieutolu."

"Deal?"

"Eh."

"Huh. That what did you offer? What have you given that man for the price of information?"

"Nothing much. I didn't give him anything important. Firstly, I helped Baron Lieutolu to escape so that he would not be caught by Sion, and the location of Ryner so that he could catch up to Ryner… Only this. Are there any problems with that?"

"…"

Sion was unable to reply to this.

Luke continued, unheeding, “Ma, there can’t be any problems. You want to save Ryner. And Baron Lieutolu wants to save his son. Both of your interests are the same, so there aren’t any problems… If there’s anything wrong with what I did, please tell me.”

Towards his question, Sion glared at Luke and said, “…No, there isn’t.”

There was nothing wrong. Luke’s words were reasonable. He was very clear and there was nothing to complain about. So there couldn’t be anything wrong.

There were no problems.

But even so, looking at that man’s smile—looking at that innocent, but unfathomable smile, he felt an unease in his heart.

It was as if he had been lied to. It was a colourless, formless, invisible trick that made him suspicious.

Luke continued to smile. He smiled innocently but his expression was undecipherable.

Then.

“That’s good. Since Sion has accepted this, let’s continue.”

Sion frowned, troubled by this. “What’s there to talk about?”

He laughed again. “Of course. Anyway, it should be you we’re talking about now, right? Sion. You have been carrying this alone and hiding it from us. What we’re going to talk about…”

Luke gently set Milk down on the floor again and stood up. Looking towards Sion, he said, “… From now on, I will be explaining my secrets to you, the first king that I have approved of. The secret I have been carrying. The secret I have been holding.”

Sion looked at Luke, annoyed. He looked at Luke with an expression of resignation. There was no need for any more secrets.

“…After all you’ve said, what secrets are there? It sounds a little scary.”

“Right? But please listen.”

“If I don’t want to?”

“You don’t want? Wu~Eh. Ma, it’s okay if you don’t listen, but you’ll regret it later.”

Sion sighed tiredly. “…You are a truly troublesome person.”

“Is it like that?”

“Ah ah.”

“But I’m useful, right?”

“It’s troublesome if you’re too useful.”

“There we go, there we go~ You should be elated that you have a useful subordinate like me.”

Sion looked at him through half-lidded eyes.

He looked at this smiling man who was too useful, who could be friend or foe.

Then he sighed again.

This man would continue to talk about this secret. So he breathed in deeply.

Then Sion said. “… Then? What is that secret of yours?”

Finally, Luke stopped smiling. He wiped away that innocent smile and narrowed his sharp eyes.

Then.

“…It’s not something that is very important… it’s about a monster that you and the Goddesses do not know about. It is about the person who is controlling this script from the backstage. It is about the monster who truly controls the Hero and the Goddesses.”

Luke said.

He said that it was about the real person who was controlling the script from the backstage.

He said the monster who was controlling everything.

Sion looked at him in surprise. “…What are you saying…”

Luke interrupted Sion. Then he said, “They call themselves ‘Worshippers’.”

“‘Worshippers’? What are they?” Sion asked. Luke shrugged.

“Sa? It's probably a world that we are unable to understand, an existence that we are unable to understand, like the Hero and the Goddesses… But there are some issues that can be understood. There are some matters that I can understand. Like, what you’ve started to discover? Why can a mere human, Baron Lieutolu, wield the power to curse you—the Hero? How does he know how to summon the Goddess?”

Sion nodded his head at this.

“I see. So those ‘Worshippers’ are the ones controlling Lieral.”

But Luke shook his head.

“Not only Baron Lieutolu. They were the ones to give the Rhule Fragmei to the Gastark Empire. Then, giving you the protector… Lucile Eris, allowing the Goddesses to have astounding powers were caused by them.”

Suddenly, in response to what Luke had said, a man suddenly appeared in front of Sion. A beautiful blond man appeared.

Then Lucile Eris said, “…What you said just now, what does it mean?”

Luke laughed when he saw Lucile who had suddenly appeared. “Ah ah, I finally meet with you… the foolish Sword who thought he had signed a contract with a thousand demons by his own power—Lucile Eris-san~”

He laughed when he said that. Luke laughed, as if he were mocking everything about Lucile.

“…”

Nothing was said.

Lucile just looked at Luke.

Sion also stared at Luke.

They watched this man who was always laughing and unpredictable.

“…”

Then Luke replied. When he had ensured that everyone's attention was fixed on him, he said, "…Then. All the actors have arrived… let us start talking. How we will escape from the monster that is controlling the Hero and the Goddesses. The plan to escape from those creatures' plans. Let us talk about this—King Sion Astal."

Luke said this after he laughed mockingly. And then he knelt on the ground.

Chapter 3: Beginning α

His memory was not complete.

Although he had finally found the answer to what he had always been seeking, but he had been unable to recall everything.

"…"

But this was enough.

That missing memory.

It was good enough that the empty hole in his chest that had always been torturing him was filled.

"…"

Ryner could remember it now.

That missing memory.

He could remember that what had filled that empty space in his memory-those memories that had been shackled with the chains of forgetfulness.

They were the memories of him before his fifth birthday.

They were memories that existed long before he opened his eyes in that battlefield filled with corpses.

In his memory, his black-haired and gentle mother had said this.

"… love you, Felna. I love you."

In his memory, his father with tired eyes that were filled with intelligence said.

"I will always protect you. No matter what happens, I will always protect you."

They had seemed like they were about to cry. Ryner was unable to understand

why they seemed like they were about to cry. And the two of them had called him Felna.

Felna.

Felna.

After the second and third time they called him by that name, he finally recalled the meaning of that name.

Felna Lieutolu.

That was his, Ryner's real name. But that had disappeared. It had vanished from this world. Because it was taken as a 'sacrifice'.

His name, memories, personality-everything had been offered to the monster living in the other world.

Towards this, Ryner had said,

"I'm scared."

He had said.

"I'm scared to forget about Daddy and Mommy."

So his mother had almost seemed like she wanted to cry. Her expression was an extremely lonely one.

But, as if she waved away that sadness, a smile appeared on her face and she stroked Ryner's head.

"It's alright. It's alright, Felna. This is all for you…"

"But"

Father interrupted what Ryner wanted to say.

"… Don't worry. Even if you forget us, we won't forget. We will definitely rescue you and welcome you. One day, when all difficulties have been dealt with, we will come to get you. So don't worry."

He had said that.

Ryner had relaxed. Because Father was a person who would definitely not lie to him, so Ryner felt relieved at his words.

But he was still a little uneasy, he asked, “…Definitely?”

His father had smiled gently and nodded.

“Definitely. Sleep quickly. Everything will end when you awake.”

As he said this, Father stroked Ryner’s head too.

Father’s hand was very warm and Mother’s hand was very smooth. They overlaid their hands on Ryner’s head and held on to each other tightly. Ryner felt very happy and comforted by this. He felt as if he could finally be at ease and slowly dozed off.

Then Father said.

“… It will be fine, Felna. This way, you won’t have to fear the curse of the Alpha Stigma anymore.”

Mother continued.

“… I will always, always protect you here. No matter what disaster you encounter, I will always protect you.”

The two of them started crying when they said this.

At that time, he was unable to understand why they were crying.

But now he understood.

He could understand what the two of them wanted to do at that time.

And the contract with the Other World.

His mother’s sacrifice so that the Goddesses would be tricked.

His father’s despair at sacrificing his wife so that his son could be saved.

“…”

But that didn’t matter now.

Compared to this.

Compared to this, what was more important to him was—

That.

“…I…”

He whispered.

“…I… A monster like me was loved when I was brought into this world.”

He whispered.

In that moment.

He woke up.

“…”

Ryner opened his eyes. But his vision was blurry.

“…Ah.”

He moaned.

Then he noticed that he was actually crying. He wanted to wipe the tears away, but he continued to weep ceaselessly.

Towards this.

“…Ah, eh, ai—”

After two or three tries, he finally managed to wipe away his tears.

He confirmed that he was not crying and then lightly breathed in. Then he got up and surveyed his surroundings.

Looking at his surroundings, Ryner softly said,

“…Rain, huh.”

Then he kneeled on the floor of the carriage and tried to reach out of the shelter.

It seemed as if the rain was as heavy as expected.

Then,

“Aish.”

Ryner followed the sound and walked out.

It was extremely dark outside. Maybe it was because of the dark clouds or because it was evening.

Ryner looked at the dark, rainy scene.

There were Nelpha soldiers and citizens surrounding him. And it seemed as if

they were still moving.

Everyone looked tired and they were still travelling under these weather conditions, it meant that they couldn't throw off Roland's pursuit.

Ryner walked to an elderly person nearby,

"Ne ne, can I ask something?"

The elderly person looked his way, then asked,

"What is it?"

Ryner nodded,

"Ya, about that… I was injured and I slept for a while, so I don't have any idea of what time it is now… What time is it? Night? Morning?"

"It's morning."

"Morning, huh. Hey hey, it can't be we travelled through the night."

But the elderly person shook his head.

"How can that be. We just started moving. We don't have to worry about the pursuit soldiers from Roland if we've reached here."

Hearing this, Ryner frowned, "…Heh, the situation has changed drastically since I slept. Don't have to worry about the pursuit soldiers from Roland? Does that mean we've crossed the boundaries?"

The elderly person nodded, "Crossed two, ne."

"Two!? Ai, ha? Then, this isn't Cassla."

The elderly person shook his head. "How long did you sleep for? This is the northern side of Cassla, the Southern Country of Ali. Ma, we can cross over today. Vois Fieurelle-san is at a country called the Republic of Belis, making preparations to welcome us."

Hearing what the old man said, Ryner slowly remembered what had happened before he lost consciousness.

Yes.

Roland. Sion had foolishly used a Heroes' Relic to start a massacre, but he was

stopped by Vois.

Then, a monster had appeared from under Vois's feet…

"…"

Ryner narrowed his eyes when he thought of this.

He remembered the monster that had appeared under Vois's feet.

That thing had called itself 'Goddess'.

Ryner knew that Goddes. That was the name of the monster from the Other World that had made the contract with his father, Lieral.

Of course, his father had not told Ryner who was still a child about the detailed process—he had said, 'Anyway you'll forget everything quickly', so even though he did not get a detailed explanation, but he had still remembered this point.

The second opponent his father had contracted with—that was the Goddess.

After remembering that, Ryner murmured,

"… Talking about which, who was the first person that father made a contract with?"

He suddenly thought of that.

His father had not spoken of that.

He had only said, in order to rescue Ryner, he had made two contracts with monsters. Then who was the first person he had made a contract with?

Ryner wanted to remember this. He wanted to remember from his recently recovered memories, but he still could not remember it.

So he frowned,

"… Ah ah~, ma, it's only regaining memories, it can't be that easy to understand everything, huh." He said softly.

Talking of which, he did not understand how he had suddenly regained those forgotten memories.

Before losing consciousness, from the conversation between the Goddess and that monster, α, that wanted to emerge from Ryner's eyes, it seemed as if Ryner

had a connection with them, so he had done something like that to himself.

"…Talking about which, this is too sudden, so I can't completely understand what is going on." He said in frustration.

The old man nodded his head.

"Exactly. Not too long ago, we were still living peacefully under King Gread Nelphi's reign. That group of arrogant people from Roland… Roland's…" But the old man stopped here. He stopped, as if trying to hold back his emotions from overwhelming him and his voice trembled.

Then.

Then the old man tightly held the hand of a girl who had one side of her face bandaged. She was probably his granddaughter.

Seeing this, Ryner asked, "…Your granddaughter?"

The old man shook his head.

"No. My family has been killed because of that beam of light."

Ryner's contorted slightly at this. But he suppressed it. Because the ones who felt the real pain was this old man and everyone else. So he continued.

"… Is that so. Then this kid?"

"This child's family has, has died too."

"…"

Towards this.

Towards this, Ryner could only say,

"… Is that so."

Besides the pity for that old man and girl, a feeling of unease arose in his heart.

Because that light.

Because that Heroes' Relic—because that beam of light, a light that caused the cruel massacre, was something not to be used by humans.

Because Kiefer, Toale, Arua, Kuku-couldn't they have died too.

“…”

An unease permeated him.

If they still survived, then that would be good. Even though this old man’s family had died and this girl’s family had died, he still wished that his companions had survived—he started to think about the most disappointing matters.

“…”

His body started to tremble.

He looked around for his companions’ silhouettes. He checked whether his companions had survived. But he couldn’t find them.

There were only tired soldiers and citizens moving here.

Ryner asked, “…Ne, Ojii-san.”

“Eh?”

“The leader of this group… Who is the person in charge of these people from Nelpha? Is it Toale?”

Hearing this, the man’s face contorted. Like earlier, his face was filled with anger.

Seeing this, Ryner said, “… It can’t be.”

He couldn’t stop himself. “It can’t be, this kind of situation… You’re lying.”

He looked around again. He looked at who was at the front of the people from Nelpha. He ran towards the soldier who was leading the group. He caught up quickly.

Facing the soldier, he asked, “Hey, you. Who is the man in charge of this group?”

The soldiers turned towards him. Upon seeing Ryner, their faces brightened.

“Ah, you-you are Ryner-san who chased away the Roland soldiers!! We have heard of what you did…”

Ryner interrupted them and continued. “Enough with the nonsense, tell me.

Who is the leader of this group?” He shouted. The soldiers were rather frantic.

“… It’s Major Cyrus.” They replied.

Major Cazer Cyrus. He was capable Imperial Nelpha army officer was following Toale. But why would Cyrus be in charge of the army? The leader here should be Toale. So why was it Cyrus and not Toale who was leading them?

Then Ryner thought of something. It couldn’t be.

It couldn’t be. It couldn’t be. It couldn’t be.

Toale, he.

“…”

Toale couldn’t have died, could he?

Thinking of this, Ryner almost collapsed to the ground. How could this-how could this be.

Something like this could never happen.

Because.

Because, because Kiefer was with Toale? Arua and his girlfriend, Kuku were with them too?

What if.

If Toale died.

Because if the light that the Heroes’ Relic held by Roland killed my companions.

I.

Then I will.

“…”

Cannot forgive Sion.

That would mean I cannot forgive that guy. Ryner thought.

The terror and despair swamped Ryner and he felt like crying.

Then he asked the soldier that seemed a little timid in facing Ryner who was overly nervous, “…Then where is Cyrus?”

The soldier pointed up further ahead.

“Major Cyrus is at the front because we are going to cross the boundary…”

Ryner didn’t wait for him to finish. He had started running. He passed the group of soldiers and citizens.

There was some distance to the front of the group.

Although the killing light from Roland had killed a large number of people, there were still two thousand people. There were people, people, people. He had been running for some time, but he still couldn’t see the front.

Even so, he continued running. He ran desperately. All the while, he yelled, please give way and excuse me, as he continued running.

Finally, he saw the group that seemed to be leading the refuges.

The black armored soldiers that were commanded by Vois were in the head of the army and a group of men wearing the Nelpha army uniform seemed to be on the guard to protect the Nelpha citizens.

At the head of these Nelpha soldiers was Major Cyrus.

The first time he had saw him, those sharp eyes were slightly tired. He did not look well and his tea-coloured hair was streaked with dirt and mud.

Seeing him now, Ryner couldn’t help but think that he had missed several fights while he was asleep. He felt even more depressed.

If there had been a fight, then the chances of his comrades being injured were increased.

“…Damn it.” Ryner moaned and started running again. He passed by the Nelpha soldiers and approached Cyrus.

Cyrus quickly noticed him, “… Ah ah, you’ve finally woken, huh. You were injured badly…”

He looked to Ryner’s left shoulder as he said that, “…Huuu. Even that kind of wound can be healed… The army doctor said there was no choice but to amputate it. I see. That annoying brat wasn’t lying about everything.”

Hearing this, Ryner remembered. His arm had been slashed by the Roland soldiers and had injured his bone too.

Ryner had felt that, apart from amputation, there was nothing else to be done for that wound. In that kind of place where there were no medical facilities, there was no way for him to heal it. The blood would not stop unless it was amputated and cauterized.

But now his shoulder was only slightly bandaged and it didn't hurt when he moved it.

Ryner tried moving his left arm then looked at Cyrus. "… Is that annoying brat Vois?" he asked. Cyrus turned to the black armored group that was walking in front of the soldiers and citizens, and nodded.

"Ah ah. He brought you who was near death and Ferris Eris here. He said he was the reinforcement that you called… Well, is that true?"

Saying this, he looked at the Nelpha soldiers formation. That formation was so that he could attack the rear of Vois's black-armored soldiers and then spread out.

Looking at Ryner thinking, Cyrus nodded.

"…If anyone trusts him on the battlefield, then they don't have the right to live."

"Yes. You're really capable… I can slightly understand why everyone trusts you."

But Cyrus ignored Ryner and said. "Don't talk nonsense. Answer my question.

Is that guy really your companion?"

Hearing this, Ryner looked at the black-armored group walking in front of them.

In front of them was a simple and roofless carriage that seemed like a palanquin where Vois was sleeping on.

"… Who knows. It's not wrong that we know each other… but he can't be easily trusted. That guy is a liar. But."

Hearing this, Cyrus nodded in agreement. "…Ah ah. Under these kind of circumstances, we can only depend on him. I am already unable to return to Nelpha. There is no country that is willing to accept a few thousand soldiers and

citizens. If that man is really able to prepare accommodations for everyone, then we can only depend on him.” He said.

Ryner nodded his head.

“Has Vois prepared for us to be welcomed in the Republic of Belis?”

“Ah ah.”

“Then, he wants us to join the Anti-Roland Coalition he created?”

“Ah ah.”

Watching Cyrus reply, Ryner asked with a trembling voice, “Then, Cyrus… Who was it who accepted Vois’s proposal?”

No, actually he asked with a voice trembling with fear.

Then he held his breath. He held his breath because he was too nervous.

Because what if.

What if the one who accepted Vois’s proposal wasn’t Toale. What if it wasn’t Toale who was supposed to be leading these Nelpha citizens and soldiers.

“…”

That would mean that Toale had really died. If Toale had died, then Kiefer was dead too. Kuku was dead too. And he didn’t know why Ferris who was supposed to be with him was missing. From the dirt on Cyrus’s body, it seemed as if two or three fights had occurred.

At that moment.

At that moment, the possibility of Ferris dying because she was unable to treat her wounds—

“…Wu.”

Towards his own imagination.

Ryner wanted to vomit at his own imagination. He wanted to yell out loud. He wanted to cry.

But he frantically forced himself to calm down. Even though he forced himself to calm down, he couldn’t do it. He couldn’t breathe. Just like that. If Cyrus

didn't answer, Ryner would die because of lack of air, he thought. At this moment, "…Toale-sama said… if it's someone you know, then we can trust him." Cyrus said.

As he said that, "……Puaaah."

Ryner released his breath. Then he scrunched his face but he couldn't stop himself from laughing.

"…"

What, he was still living, what kind of joke was that, don't make everyone worry.

He wanted to laugh. But he forced himself to stop.

He was a terrible person for being able to laugh because his comrades were still alive.

But even so.

Even so.

"…That's great." Ryner said. He said that's great with a little sob.

Then, "…Where's Toale now?" He asked.

Cyrus pointed behind him to a large carriage that had was covered to prevent others from looking in.

"In that carriage." He replied.

"But I have something to tell you first." He said.

Ryner asked, "What?"

Cyrus looked to the carriage with a steady expression that a twenty-year old person should not have.

"…Toale-sama's body has been harmed by that strange beam from Roland.

Half his body has been injured. With such a big wound, he can't be saved." He said.

Ryner had difficulties understanding what Cyrus had said, "…Ah?" He could only reply.

But Cyrus continued, “But the people haven’t been told this yet. Before we reach the Republic of Belis, we will tell the people that Toale-sama is in charge of everything—this mental relief is needed. The current situation is not very steady. If there are more rumors of Toale-sama dying in battle, then the people will be unable to progress. So after you see Toale-sama, don’t go around crying.

You have already revealed too much from your earlier expressions. Do you think you’re the only one who wants to cry? Don’t be naïve. I have already succeeded in leaving Nelpha and stepped on this journey—there are no obstacles on the path we are taking. So, laugh. Laugh when you go to see Toale-sama. Don’t spread that meaningless unease among the people who have lost their family and companions, but still continue to strive.” Cyrus said this in a calm, steady manner.

Towards this.

Towards this, Ryner.

“……Ah ah… Ah ah, yes. I apologize.” He replied quietly.

He understood what Cyrus had said. He had completely understood. There were children among the citizens. There were some children who had seen their family disappear right in front of them. Everyone was struggling against their pain and continuing.

He couldn’t be so naïve.

So.

“…….Ha, ha ha.” Ryner laughed quietly. He laughed with an expression that was about to cry.

Cyrus nodded when he saw this, “…Toale-sama is in that carriage, thinking of a battle strategy. You can go greet him.”

He said this with a different, resounding voice that even the surrounding people could hear it.

So Ryner replied, “I understand.” Then he walked away. He walked towards the

carriage-the carriage that was transporting Toale.

He opened the cloth door of the carriage and looked in. Toale, Kiefer, Arua, Kuku and even Ferris were in there.

Everyone looked to him. Looked at Ryner.

Then.

Kiefer said with tears in her eyes, "…Ry-Ryner…"

She held a strange stone in her hand. She frantically pressed that stone to Toale's shoulder.

No, it was the part of his body that used to have a shoulder.

"…"

Yes.

His right shoulder was gone. No, it wasn't only his shoulder. The right side of his chest, his right wrist and his right leg, too. The right side of his body, one third of his body, had disappeared, as if it had never existed in the first place.

Kiefer spoke to him with a trembling, hoarse and nearly inaudible voice, "…To-Toale he… Toale he tried to protect me from that beam of light…"

But she didn't continue.

But this was already enough for him to understand.

So Ryner said, "……Yo."

"… You seem to be rather energetic, Toale."

Toale seemed to be conscious and heard this. He turned to Ryner, "…That joke is not funny."

Although he said that, he still laughed.

Ryner climbed onto the carriage and got near to Toale. Ferris stood up, "Come here, Ryner." She said as she offered her seat.

Ryner nodded his head, "Thanks."

He sat on the left side of Toale and looked at his pale face,

“…Protecting…Kiefer, huh?”

Hearing this, Toale laughed and said, “…Protecting girls is expected, isn’t it?”

“Yeah.”

“So tell Kiefer-san too. Don’t cry, ne. Anyway, I would have died on the battlefield anyway…”

But Kiefer still frantically pressed the glowing stone on Toale’s body. “But, but.”

She could only say that. Because her voice was choked with tears and sobs.

Ryner looked at the stone she was holding, “… That’s Vois’s?” he asked. Ferris nodded.

“…He said it is a healing stone. It’s a Heroes’ Relic. He said—although it has its limits, but it can heal fatal wounds.”

Hearing this, Ryner looked at the stone again. Then he looked at the wound that the stone was pressing on. Surprisingly the blood had already stopped. The wound was starting to heal. The flesh was starting to regenerate and his body was healing.

But.

“…”

Even so, Toale’s life was slipping away.

Probably.

Probably because Toale’s wound was fatal.

Toale said, “…It’s because of this stone that I was able to stay alive until Ryner-san woke up.” He said with that tired and pained voice.

Hearing this, Ryner started, “…What are you saying.”

But he was interrupted, “I’m about to die. Personal matters… I know them the best.”

“It’s like that, huh.”

“Ai ai.”

“Is it painful?”

But he shook his head. “… Compared to those who lost their relatives but don’t have anyone… the children who have no justice… no righteous companions to come to help them, who can only progress while crying, this pain is nothing at all.”

He had a sad face while he said this and looked out of the carriage. Of course, so that no one would be able to look in from outside—no one would be able to see Toale’s dying image, so there were curtains on the window but this wasn’t what he was seeing. He was looking at the suffering in the people’s hearts outside the carriage.

Towards this, Ryner,

“… Ah ah. That’s right.”

“Yes.”

“Ah ah.”

He said. Then he looked at Toale. He looked at those eyes that were slowly losing their life.

Then.

“… Then?” Ryner asked.

Toale looked towards him and smiled, “… I was waiting for you to wake up.”

Hearing this, Ryner scrunched his face up in annoyance, “Ah~, that face, you want to push something troublesome onto me again~”

“Ha ha, you gu-guessed right.”

“Can I don’t do it? Whatever that you tell me to help you do, can I don’t do it?

You can continue to live yourself and go do it yourself. I can’t bear the burden of so many people’s lives.”

But,

“Please, Ryner-san. I can only count on you…” Toale stopped when he reached here.

Suddenly.

His words stopped suddenly.

Something, something important was being lost from his body quickly.

“Wait, hey.” Although Ryner said that, he could only smile,

“…Ma…ma, forget it. Anyway, Ry…ner-san, will definitely help…. Ah ah, at last… I can see you…”

He only said until here.

Then he stopped.

Everything ended.

Everything had ended.

One person’s life had ended so easily.

Toale’s life had surprisingly ended so easily.

Towards this.

“No… Wait, you’re lying… No, noooooooooo!” Kiefer yelled.

Arua and Ku Ku cried.

Ferris didn’t look towards them. She looked into the distance emotionlessly.

She looked into the distance despite the fact that there was a piece of cloth blocking her view to the outside view.

Ryner he.

“…”

He held Toale’s hand. He held Toale’s remaining hand, his left hand that had not disappeared.

Then, “…Here it is again… He pushed an extremely troublesome job to me again. I’m not doing it. I don’t want to bear the burden of people’s lives. Do that kind of troublesome matter on your own.” He said that softly and tightly held Toale’s hand.

He could feel his face contorting. He could feel the tears almost flowing out.

But he desperately forced them back. He tolerated the pain so that his tears would not flow out. Because like what Toale had said. There were people who were more unlucky than him. The people outside this carriage who were carrying a greater pain and even more people who were grieving because of this foolish war.

So.

So he held back his tears, "…Ah ah, damn it… Aaaaaaaah, damn it! I know. I'll do it, is that fine, I'll do it. I'll bear the burden of these people's lives. Yours too.

Everyone's. So…so." Ryner looked at Toale's face as he said this. He looked at the still smiling face of Toale, who was dead.

He closed his eyes. He helped Toale to close his warm, gentle eyes.

Then.

"…So. I will do this… So sleep peacefully, you simpleton." He said and stood up.

Ferris looked at him and said something that did not suit her, "…Are you alright? Ryner."

So Ryner asked in return, "You?"

Towards this, she was still emotionless, "No."

Ryner nodded. "I see."

"Ah ah."

"I understand. Then, let's exchange. When I slept, everyone worked hard.

Leave the rest to me and stay here for the moment. I…" He opened the flap to the carriage as he said this, "I'll go see Vois."

He walked out.

Then he passed by the Nelpha citizens and soldiers and the soldiers that Vois commanded.

He moved towards the front of the procession.

"…"

At the front, Vois stood, as if waiting for Ryner to arrive.

He looked at the carriage where Toale had passed away in, smling.

Looking at Vois's face.

"…What's there to be happy about?" Ryner used a slightly harsh tone to ask.

Vois shrugged, "Ya~, what a touching speech. Carry the burden of these people's lives—what a touching phrase." He said rather insincerely.

So Ryner glared at Vois, "…You bastard, are you mocking me?"

So.

"Ai ai." Vois nodded. Then he smiled, "Ai ai. Yes. Talking about that, even if someone useless like Toale Nelphi died, it won't affect our situation much. If you panic over such petty things, then you're are really pitifully stupid…"

Ryner ran towards Vois when he heard this, his fist curled and raised, swinging to Vois's face.

Vois still used that smiling, mocking face to look at Ryner's actions.

Just as the fist was about to hit him.

"…Anyway, Toale-san is not dead yet." Vois suddenly said.

Towards this, Ryner released a dazed sound, "…Heh?" Then he frantically stopped his punch. He managed to stop his fist from hitting Vois's face. But Vois turned his face so that his fist made contact with Vois's face.

"Yaaaaa~n" He pretended to be thrown to the side by the punch and landed on the ground. He pretended to land on the ground with a 'umph'. Then he pressed his uninjured face and said, "You-you-you hit a kid who did nothing wrooong~!?

You owe me, so please return this favour in the future…"

But Ryner interrupted him, "Hey, don't bother about that. Compared to that, what did you say just now? To-Toale he… he didn't die…"

Hearing this, Vois nodded his head. "He didn't die, you know?"

Ryner gaped in surprise, "Ai, ai, but I witnessed it? Toale's death… His pulse…

his breathing…"

“Stopped?”

“Ah ah.”

Then Vois said, “I was the one who stopped his heart and breathing. Then if I want him to move, it’d be simple. Anyway, to Derunio ‘Death Transference’—ah, that’s the healing stone that I gave Kiefer-san—if it’s that, that kind of wound is easily healed. Ma, although the price is quite large.”

Towards this, “Th-then… Toale, he”

“So he might still be living.”

Hearing this, Ryner turned around, thinking to return to the carriage.

At this moment.

“…But if he is to live or die, that depends on my mood.” Vois said.

Hearing this, Ryner stopped and turned around. He glared at Vois. “… Ah ah?

What is that. You did this to force me to help with your plan?” He asked.

But Vois shook his head. “No no. But I feel that even if I don’t take Toale-san as a hostage, you will still help me.”

“Then, why did you do this.” Ryner asked. Vois laughed. He laughed mockingly, as if he were looking down on Ryner.

Then he said. “That’s simple. Because Ryner-san, you—you’re much weaker than what I had expected.” He said.

Ryner was unable to understand the meaning of these words.

Ryner was unable to understand the meaning behind Vois’s words.

Weak.

Weak.

“…”

Perhaps he was really weak. He had been unable to do anything in front of the Goddess that had came from Vois’s shadows. So, he wasn’t able to become the power that this guy had expected.

But Ryner could not understand what this had to do with Toale.

He couldn’t understand what Vois was thinking about.

Vois said. “…Isn’t it like that? You witnessed Roland killing many Nelpha citizens—but you stopped me from using the Rhule Fragmei to stop the Roland soldiers. What does that count for? What did that accomplish? This is a war, you know? But you still said we couldn’t use such dangerous weapons?

Something dangerous like that couldn’t be used by humans? Please stop joking.

It was the other party who attacked first. Then we can only counter-attack. The other party wants to kill us. So we can only kill the enemy. You don’t even understand this, yet you want to bear the burden of other people’s lives? Bear the burden of the lives of the citizens? Not using weapons? Ha ha, ha ha ha, really, even if Ryner-san is a person who can only sleep, please leave your daydreaming to when you’re sleeping.” Saying that, he stopped smiling. He wiped away his cheerful smile and looked at Ryner.

“But on the battlefield, you can’t joke about this. Do you want to cause all your comrades to die just because of that naïve thinking?” He said.

Towards this.

“…”

Ryner could not reply.

Because what Vois had said was too true. Because what he had said was too true.

Checking Ryner’s face, Vois continued. A smile appeared again, “This is why I did this. I wanted to let you the experience the terror of losing your companion.

This was quite troublesome, you know? I had to think up of quite a few reasons to change the place where you were undergoing healing.”

Hearing this, Ryner finally understood why he wasn’t together with Ferris, Kiefer and Toale when he woke up.

Vois had arranged for him to wake up in a different place so that Ryner would not be able to understand the current situation.

To awake in a battleground.

But be unable to see his companions.

It can't be-it can't be that everyone's dead. He wanted Ryner to be anxious.

At that time. Because he had stopped Vois from counter-attacking, so he had caused many companions to die. Vois wanted to trigger this kind of fear in him.

Everything was planned by Vois. All this was his meddling.

So Ryner tensed, "…You are still very…"

Vois happily interrupted Ryner and said, "Cute?"

"Annoying…"

Hearing what Ryner said, Vois was even more happy, "Then, this situation has four effects."

"… Didn't I say, you're very annoying."

But the more he said that Vois was annoying, the happier Vois was.

"First, I said this earlier. Let you personally experience your companion's death.

And hope that you will understand that you will continue to cause others to die if you don't attack the enemy because you are so gentle and weak."

Saying this, Vois stepped forward and leaned towards him, "Then second. Let you experience, that even if you are prepared to attack the enemy… Even so, the fact that your companions will still die. This time he didn't die. Actually, this time he didn't die. But next time, he will die. He will die surprisingly quickly and easily. This is war—and humans are extremely frail." Vois said this sadly. He was pretending to be sad as he said that. Then he continued, "But you said that you would take the responsibility of the people's lives. You said you would take the responsibility of the people's lives. Then even if your companions die, you don't have the right to stop. Even if Kiefer-san is decapitated. Even if Ferris-san dies, there won't be time to cry. You don't have the privilege to cry. This is a test."

Hearing this.

Ryner imagined Kiefer dying.

Ryner imagined Ferris dying.

He only imagined it.

“…”

Just by imagining it, he felt fear and it seemed as if he were unable to stand.

But, like what Vois had said.

He could only continue.

He had no choice but to continue. His comrades would die. Important and precious people would die. Then the reason for those deaths was— Because Ryner had chosen this path.

“…”

Because Ryner had chosen this path, so his comrades who followed him would die.

This was expected. Even if he did not think about it, this was an expected and understandable matter. No, he had experienced that not long ago.

Ferris had almost been killed because she was protecting Ryner.

Toale lost half of his body because of that light released by Roland.

No, Kiefer, Arua and Ku Ku to, they lived because they were lucky. It was miraculous. Everyone could have died in that split second.

Even so.

“…”

Even so, if he still wanted to continue.

He had to be prepared for that.

He had to be prepared for the fact that his comrades would die.

Ryner glared at Vois, feeling hatred.

Seeing this, Vois shrugged, “It’s not my problem if anyone dies.”

“I know. I’m only speechless because I had to be lectured by a brat like you in order to realize my stupidity.”

“…Wu eh. Ma, anyway, everyone except me is an idiot so you don’t have to

mind that.”

“You jest.” Ryner said with a tired smile.

But Vois still continued, “Then.”

“Hey, there’s still more.”

“Didn’t I say there were four effects?”

“Four. Four. Alright, then what are the remaining two?”

Vois nodded and continued. “Through the hoist of having Toale Nelphi die, Toale-san should personally understand the situation. Before he died, he thought the best method of action was to leave the Nelpha soldiers and citizens to Ryner-san… Which means, when he wakes up later, the king here will not be him. But you, Ryner-san—this effect.”

But to this, Ryner said, “Even if you didn’t do something like that, Toale’s relationship with me…”

But Vois interrupted Ryner, “Your relationship with Toale-san can be anything. I meant it so that the Nelpha soldiers can successfully integrate into my army. Ma, when Toale-san awakes, he will definitely want to be one of you personnel…

He will definitely let the Nelpha soldiers integrate successfully into the Anti-Roland Coalition that Ryner-san and I established.” He said.

He made it seem as if Ryner had helped him to create the Anti-Roland Coalition.

Talking about which, what had this guy said, for the sake of allowing Ryner to

kill Sion, so he had made Ryner the king of the Anti-Roland Coalition, and had come here.

From birth, Vois Fiurelle had had everything belong to him, but this time, he actually wanted to let Ryner be the king and said that he would be Ryner’s subordinate.

“…”

He tried to figure out Vois’s intentions.

No, he thought about all the lies that this guy had told him.

He thought about the Goddess hidden in his shadow, and the reason for the existence of an organization like the Anti-Roland Coalition.

But he was unable to figure out Vois's intentions based on the intel he had now.

So.

"… Then what is the fourth one?" Ryner continued.

So Vois said, "The fourth is… after this incident, to hope that you can understand the fact that you have chosen lives."

"Ah? Chose lives?" He asked. Vois nodded. He took out a stone that was similar to the stone that Kiefer had pressed to Toale's body. It was a Heroes'

Relic called Derunio.

"I have four pieces of stones like this. If you want to use this stone, you have to pay a price. The more healing needed to be done, the greater the price. Do you know what the price is?"

Of course, he didn't know. So Ryner shook his head.

"It's blood. Human blood. In order to heal Ferris-san's wounds, I needed all the blood from two people. For yours, I needed all the blood from one person and half the blood of another. And Toale-san needed all the blood from eighteen people…"

Hearing this, Ryner widened his eyes.

"Wa-wait, do-do you mean, in order to heal our wounds, we have to kill other people…"

But Vois laughed, "Do you feel surprised just by hearing that? No no, I didn't kill anyone. Ma, if I needed to kill anyone, killing ten or twenty pawns would be fine.

But if I killed more than that, no one would be willing to sacrifice themselves. I let hundreds of soldiers donate some of their blood. This way, no one would need to die."

Even after hearing this, Ryner was still uneasy. Because this person always told

lies.

If there was a need to, this person would kill ten or twenty people without hesitation. So, “Did you really not kill anyway?” Ryner asked seriously.

Vois shook his head. “If you still feel suspicious, you can go and count, you know?”

“I don’t know how many soldiers you brought.”

“Ah ha. Then you have no way to investigate.”

“You—”

But Vois still smiled. “I’m joking. I really didn’t kill anyone. But even so, you have chosen human lives. Because of the light the Demonic Beast Destroyer, Ellearms, released, many people were killed. But there were survivors. Even though they had serious injuries, but there were people who survived. If there was Derunio… if there was this stone, then they could continue to live. But there are only four pieces of this stone. There are only four pieces of this stone.

Ai ya ai ya, what should we do~” Vois said as he dangled the stone in the air.

But Ryner was very clear about what he was about to say. “… Are you saying that you didn’t help them but saved us?”

Vois nodded his head. “Exactly. But you would say that you didn’t ask for this, right? So anything could have been done towards saving you. I’m talking about others. Ferris-san and Toale-san. And a child. This time, I only used this to save those who you wanted to save. What do you think this means? Of course, I was the one who used the stone, but the one who made the decision was…” Vois stopped and threw the stone towards him.

Ryner caught the stone.

He caught the Heroes’ Relic that used human blood to heal wounds.

Confirming this, Vois continued. “… The one who made the decision about who to save was you, Ryner-san. Or I should say, you’re very clear about this? Ever since you woke up in that truck, your surroundings has been like hell. There were people who lost their parents. There were people who lost their children.

Some people lost their precious people. But, but but but but but, you still

wished for you companions to survive—you thought of this, didn't you?"

Hearing this.

Hearing what Vois said, Ryner's face tensed.

Because he had thought of that.

Because he had thought of that, in actuality.

Because Vois's words pierced deeply into Ryner's body, pierced Ryner's heart.

Seeing Ryner, Vois said with a happy and cheerful expression. "…It isn't anything to feel troubled about. That is human. Arrogant and sly, yet gentle, then suddenly warm—you are sadly human. But you are unable to continue being an ordinary human. You are unable to be an ordinary human because you have decided to carry the burden of human lives. Right, this way, hasn't your weakness lessened? Hasn't your naivety lessened? Are you prepared to be a king who is in charge of a large number of human lives?"

Towards this question, Ryner.

He shook his head. "… I'm sorry. I haven't…"

But he was interrupted by Vois.

"Then please make your preparations now. Your best friend, your opponent has already started walking on that path. He has put the lives of humans on the horizon and is walking forward in despair. Then, what about you? What do you want to do? Do you want to continue with no sacrifices? Haven't you decided to save him? Then you should progress. You should continue. Come, come come, throw away those useless dreams, progress…"

But he only spoke until halfway.

"…Enemy attack!?"

A voice rang out from the front of the procession.

Vois turned in that direction. "A la la. I was interrupted when I was about to finish speaking. Ma, but my words have mostly been etched into your mind.

Then please give me permission to let the story continue…" He walked out as he said that.

A black-armored soldier came to him, “… The enemy is an assassin from

‘Azure Princess Mercenaries’.”

Hearing this, Vois said with annoyance, “Those guys again.” Then he turned back.

“Alright, Ryner-san. It should be time for you to show your face. This is the first reason for you to become our king.”

Hearing this, Ryner tilted his head. “…What does that mean?” As he said this, he looked to the direction where the enemy was. They had probably crossed over from the boundary of the Republic of Belis.

But the enemy was from the Republic of Belis.

That meant that that there were enemies in Belis where the Nelpha citizens would be staying.

So Ryner said, “… It’s a little different from what you said?”

Vois laughed, “No no, there’s no difference? Right now, the one attacking isn’t what you suspect is a soldier from Belis. It is an assassin from a smaller but nasty organization. I was nearly killed by the assassin from that organization recently…”

Hearing this, Ryner finally found something believable in what this person was saying. “Ah ah, so you allowed me to be the king so that you would not be targeted by that assassin?”

“Mostly. Ma, although it’s not only that… Anyway, Your Majesty Ryner Lute—

please go and deal with that assassin.” He said.

Your Majesty.

So Your Majesty, please deal with the assassin—hearing this, Ryner smiled wryly, “This is the first time I’m seeing a subordinate saying this to the king.”

“Doesn’t it suit you?” Saying this, Vois flicked his finger.

In a moment.

“Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaa”

From the carriage where Toale's corpse was supposed to be, Kiefer's cries were heard loudly.

Ryner looked at Vois tiredly with half-lidded eyes and asked, "He's revived?"

Vois nodded. "That was very energetic. Let me prepare Toale-san's prosthetic arms and legs."

Ryner said softly, "How should I say this…"

Then the flap of the carriage opened and Ferris looked out, "Ry-Ry-Ry-Ryner!?

Toale's ghost, haunting…"

"Ah yes yes. He isn't haunting you. Toale is still alive."

"Still alive?"

He was about to explain what Vois had told him to Ferris, who was tilting her head.

But.

From the front of the procession, there was an explosion.

A bright light.

With no time to rest, another battle had started.

Ryner turned his eyes to the directions of the battle.

"Ferris."

"Eh?"

"Anyway, let's defeat the enemy before we talk about this. Let's go together."

He said.

She jumped down from the carriage and looked in the direction of the battle.

She reached to her waist and looked at Vois, "Vois, return me my sword."

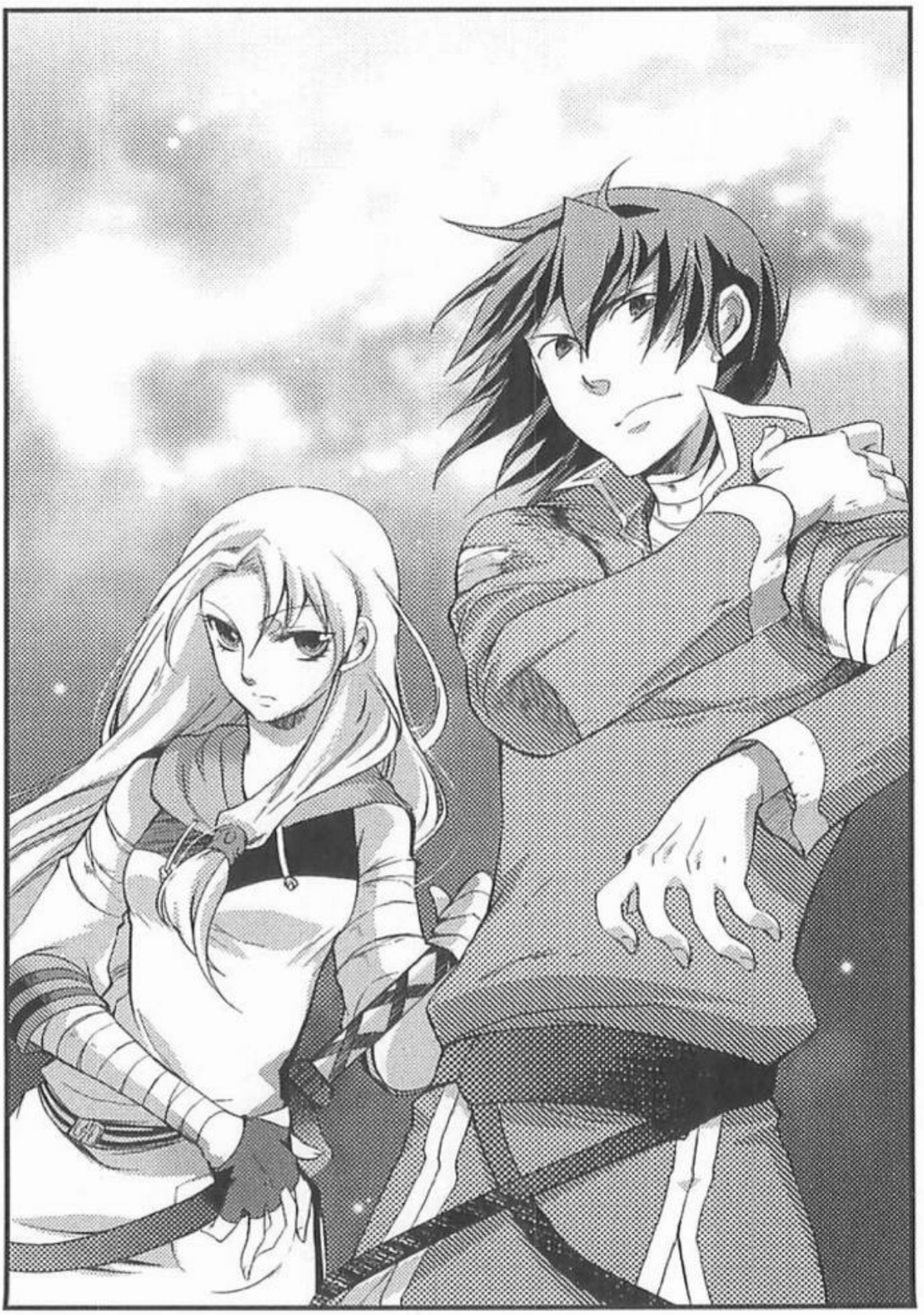
"Ai ai, of course. Relca." He said. A black-armored woman pulled out Ferris's sword where it was on the carriage and threw it towards her.

Ferris caught it and fastened it to her waist. Then she nodded her head, "…

Then let's go." She looked at Ryner.

Ryner nodded in reply, then looked to the front.

There were sounds of an intense battle from the front.



Explosions. Roaring. Cries.

Their attackers seemed to have come from a mercenary group called the Azure Princess.

Azure Princess.

A mercenary group called the Azure Princess.

"…I've never heard of it before." He muttered. He flexed his injured left wrist to check if there was any lingering pain. Then he patted his waist and told Ferris, "Do you need to prepare?"

Ferris replied, "I'm waiting for you, idiot."

"Really?"

"Wu eh."

"I see. Alright. Then…"

Ryner said, "Although it's extremely troublesome, but we still have to work hard."

He walked towards the battlefield again.

In a far northern plane.

He opened the map.

"…"

On the map was a drawing of the powers on the Menoris Continent.

First, in the south of the map was the name of Roland that had conquered the whole of the southern continent by claiming the Estabul Kingdom, Imperial Nelpha and the Runa Kingdom.

Then in the north of the map was the name of the Kingdom of Gastark that had defeated Imperial Stohle and was continuing to expand into the south. Its power had already started to reach into the central continent.

Lastly, in the centre of the map.

It was called the Central Continent, it was the largest territory in the Menoris Continent.

There were thirteen adjacent countries and three countries called the Three States were drawn to the north of these countries.

No, they were the three strongest countries in the Central Continent.

The names of the Three States were—

Geihlficlant Empire.

Ertolia Republic.

Remrus Empire.

These three countries ruled together and competed amongst themselves. They decided everything that happened in the Central Continent. And these small countries were controlled by these Three States.

So he had written down which countries currently belonged to which state.

Looking at this.

He looked at this.

The young monarch of the northern continent, Riphal Edea, king of the Gastark Empire looked at the map with his one eye, "…Fu. It looks like we'll be fighting with Geihlficlant first." He said lightly.

Long pink hair. His right eye was filled with determination and charisma, drawing everyone in and—the left eye that had been eaten by the cursed sword, Glovil.

But even so, he still carried that sword. He put that big black sword that was longer that what humans used behind his back and carried the map in one hand as he stood on the plain.

Behind him were tens of thousands of soldiers.

Although he carried the responsibility for these tens of thousands of lives, but he did not back down and happily looked at the map.

Right now, he was looking at the boundary lines on the map.

He was looking at the boundary line that separated the northern continent and the central continent.

But there were two coundary lines. There were two boundary lines between the north Gastark Empire and the Central Continent.

The east—belonged to a country in Geihlficlant Empire, Eilosendo.

The west—belonged to a country in Ertolia Republic, Deriljael Kesla.

Riphal Edea narrowed his visible right eye and looked at the two countries on his map.

No matter which was nearer or more easily attacked, he had to count in Eilosendo. And if he were to attack Deriljael Kesla first, then Geihlficlant who was nearer could attack him. This way, he would be having a war with two empires at the same time.

That would be bad.

No matter how he thought about it, it was better to defeat Eilosendo first—then move on the Geihlficlant Empire.

“Ma, Deril—, ah~, whatsitsname, I can’t remember. Alright. We should still attack the one with the easier name, Eilosendo first.” He said, then he threw the map to one side carefully.

A man standing behind him caught the map.

It was a man around the same age as Riphal—around twenty-two or twenty-three year old.

He had the same pink hair as Riphal and a pair of bright blue eyes. As if matching his eyes, his uniform was also blue.

He was Riphal Edea’s right hand man and the military advisor of the Gastark army, Reeglewaz Pentest.

That Reeglewaz—Reaz said. “…You can’t remember the name. Isn’t it because you have insufficient brain cells?”

Hearing that, Riphal turned around, “Because there’s no need to, so I’m too lazy to remember the name, Reaz. Anyway, isn’t it a country that is about to be eliminated by us and about to vanish?”

Reaz laughed. “Ma, that’s true.”

“Then, what do you think. It’s fine if we go to Geihlficlant first?”

Reaz looked to the southern sky and nodded. “There’s no problem. Geihlficlant Empire is a country that has the sea on its east. That means that when we fight Geihlficlant, we don’t have to worry about the east side. And there’s the plan to ally with the Republic of Ertolia and invade.”

But Riphal shook his head. “Ertolia wouldn’t respond. Because they will betray us quickly. Compared to their life-long enemy, Geihlficlant, Gastark that has recently emerged will be more dangerous. But when they discover that, it will be…”

“Too late… So let’s begin quickly. We have to let the name that I have been waiting for resound through the Central Contient.” Saying this, Reaz raised his hand.

By only doing this, the thousands of soldiers behind responded. These soldiers consisted of mixed groups. What had originally be the six northern countries had been conquered by Gastark, then organized to this army.

But with six different kinds of magic and the soldiers of six different countries now, they moved as if they were from the same organism.

This was Reaz’s power.

He was able to provide the soldiers who had lost their countries with evidence for a new existence, give them a new reason to live and then control them.

He had more or less used the brain-washing powers of the Rhule Fragmei, but the management of the army strongly depended on Reaz too.

Reaz ordered. “… Everyone.”

At this moment.

“Wuah, impressive. You’re able to easily command so many soldiers. The brain-washing Rhule Fragmei doesn’t even have this effect. We have to learn from you.” A woman’s voice spoke from in front of them.

Hearing this, Reaz stopped his orders.

Riphal turned his eyes to the voice. Then he tensed. Because that woman’s voice had been too near to him.

He could not feel her presence at all.

He could not feel her presence approaching at all. On this wide plain where there were tens of thousands of soldiers, there were no figures approaching him, nor any presence that could be felt.

But that voice was right by their side.

And Riphal had turned to where that voice had been.

“…”

He couldn’t see any figure.

What exactly was it.

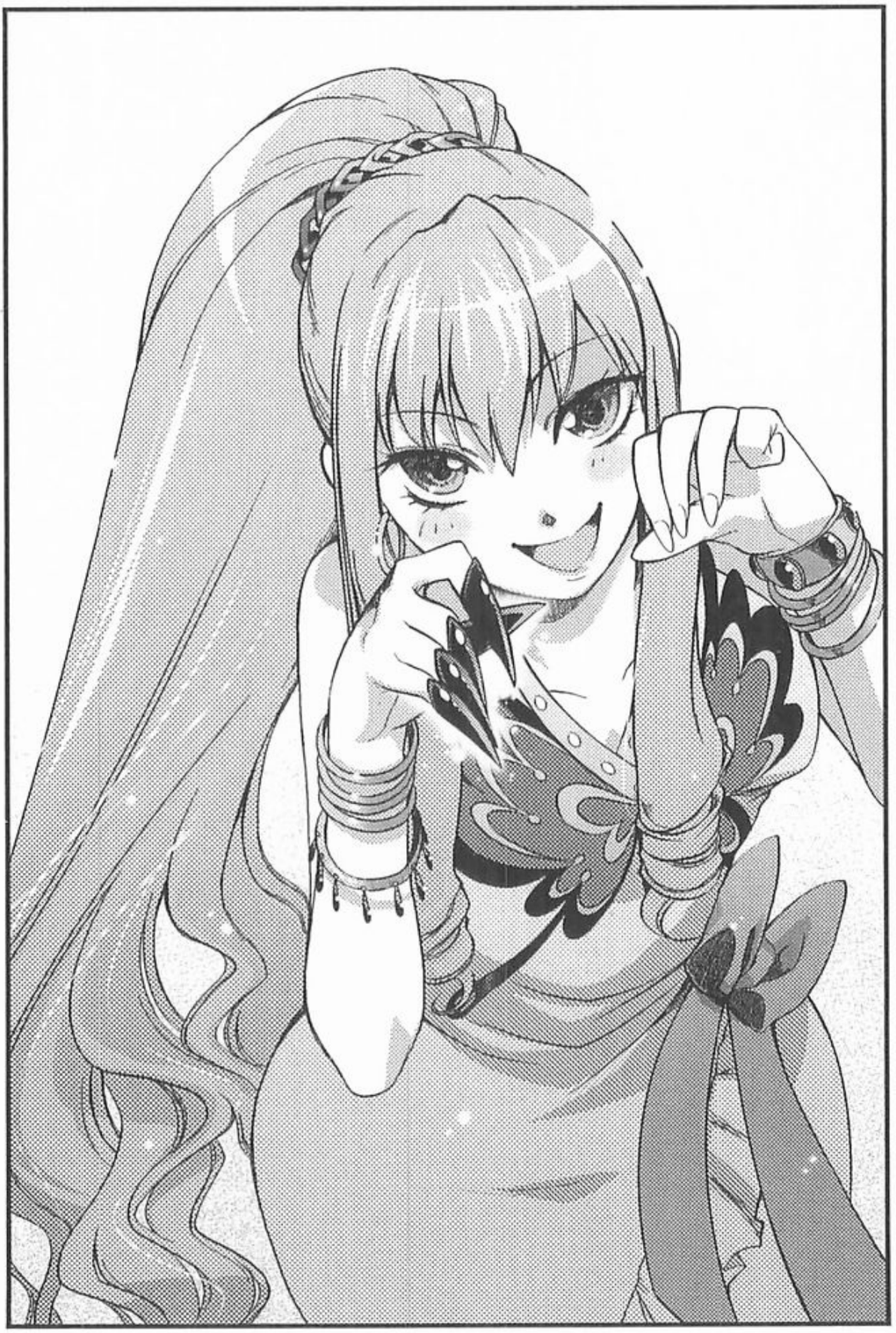
“What is this, who…” He spoke until there.

“Here, young Hero King of the North-san.” The voice was right by his ear. A breath blew gently and then a dagger shot to Riphal’s neck— “Riphal!?” Reaz yelled then pushed him away. Riphal used that force to jump away. Then he rolled on the ground and pulled out his sword as he got up. He pulled out Glovil and swung it.

He finally saw his enemy.

Looking at his enemy.

“…Wh-what is this, what exactly” Riphal said softly.



Because his enemy was very beautiful.

A beautiful woman.

She was about eighteen or nineteen years old?

She had a pretty face and adorable, challenging eyes.

She had long ice-blue coloured hair which was a rare colour and evidence that she was a holder of ‘Anomaly of Magical Conductivity’.

‘Anomaly of Magical Conductivity’—this referred to people with abnormal magical abilities. They had magical powers that were greater than even what their bodies could hold. A large number of ‘Anomaly of Magical Conductivity’

holders would always drown in their power and were controlled by it, resulting in them losing their magical compatibility and becoming magic deficient.

Even if they were deficient humans who were unable to control their spirits—

this was the name for the ‘Anomaly of Magical Conductivity’ holders.

But.

“…”

The woman in front of him did not seem to be anything like that.

Although she seemed a little stubborn, but she had intelligence in her eyes.

But those rational eyes clashed with the butterfly-patterned dress that she wore, making people confused.

A butterfly-patterned uniform and a dagger in her hand.

She stuck out her adorable tongue, “A la la, your reaction is unexpectedly fast. I actually slipped…” She hadn’t finished speaking when she threw the dagger towards him. She used a slight action and threw the dagger towards him.

The dagger flew viciously towards him. Riphal was unable to dodge. No, he couldn’t even react.

Monster, he couldn’t help but think.

This was a really dangerous monster, he couldn’t help but this.

The dagger flew straight towards him.

The dagger flew straight towards his heart.

"…"

But his sword responded. The sword that Riphal held—Glovil reacted and knocked aside the dagger.

Seeing this, the woman's eyes widened slightly.

"Oh~, you can even avoid this? Impressive." She said and narrowed her eyes slightly. "Or I should say, it seems to be the sword defending by itself~ just now.

That is Glovil, right? That was amazing. It shows that you are a 'True Hero'. I'm not so stupid to challenge a Hero, so I should retreat first."

As she said this, Reaz pulled out his sword and swung it at the woman.

But the woman didn't even look at him.

She lightly pushed his sword and then used Reaz's strength to push him away.

Reaz's posture was messed up and after he was kicked, he collapsed. Reaz's sword fell at near his lower body, "Wuah."

Reaz quickly rolled away to avoid it. Then he quickly stood up and retreated two or three steps and ran towards Riphal. He stared at the woman nervously and said. "…Riphal."

"What?"

"Use the time I take to distract this woman and escape. We have no power to deal with that kind of opponent."

"Ah? What are you joking about? How can you face that monster…"

But he was interrupted, "Of course I can't win. But the both of us can't die here.

With our comrades—the promise we made when we sacrificed our comrades with the Sword of Regeneration has not been completed, we can't die like fools… right? So please escape quickly. Then call Lir here. Only Liru can deal with here properly."

As he said that, Reaz started to weave a light square. Gastark's magic.

Compared to physical battle, Reaz was more suited to long-range magic.

But.

But that woman looked at that magic happily, “Ai~, are you going to use magic?

If it’s using magic, I wouldn’t be merciful, is that fine?” She said.

The holder of the ‘Anomaly of Magical Conductivity’ who was abnormally strong in magic said.

So Riphal stopped Reaz’s hand that was about to complete the magic.

Towards this, Reaz said, “What are you doing…”

Riphal shook his head, then looked at the woman.

“…Earlier you said, you were merciful. Then you had no intentions to kill us from the beginning?”

Hearing this, the woman smiled, “No. If I could kill you, I would feel very lucky…

Although you are the person that Glovil chose, so I couldn’t do that now. I don’t have enough tools to kill you.”

Hearing this, Riphal was more nervous. “…Why do you know this sword? You can’t be the Goddess’s subordinate”

“You’ve guessed wrongly~ Anyway, can’t you tell just by looking. How can a beautiful girl like me be that monster.” She said.

She called the Goddess a monster.

That mean that she knew about the existence of the Goddess. No, not only that.

If she knew about Glovil, then she would also know about the ‘Worshipper’ that brought the sword over to this world.

But what power would know so much about this?

“Who are you?” Riphal asked.

But she smiled beautifully and perfectly, “I’m a person who will be warning you, Riphal Edea.”

“… A person who will warn me? Warn me about what?”

“A person who will warn you about your future. You can’t come here. If you want to progress, then head to Deriljael Kesla. Don’t come to Eilosendo. I wouldn’t get my money if you go there.”

Hearing this, Riphal finally knew who this person was. “… You’re the mercenaries that Geihlficlant hired. I heard the rumors about you, Azure Princess. Is it. You are the leader of the mercenaries who have been destroying those small countries in the Central Continent, Pia Varliere.” Riphal said.

Hearing this, she smiled.

Pia Varliere smiled.

Then she said. “Not leader, it’s queen, strong and arrogant Hero-san.” Then she smiled again.

“Then, listen to what I say, Hero King of the North. Or else—” She emanated a strong killing intent. She emanated a strong killing intent that could make one’s heart stop beating.

Then she said.

She said. “Or else I’d have to kill you.”

But towards this.

Towards this Riphal laughed. He looked at her, emanating his own killing intent.

No, he was looking at his other subordinate who was standing behind her.

It was Lir.

It was Lir Orla.

Looking at Lir, Riphal said. “Kill that arrogant woman.”

Lir replied. “Of course.”

Then he raised his hand. He wore a golden ring on his finger. It was a Rhule Fragmei that only those Chosen by the gods could use—the Ring of Lightning Beasts.

He waved the ring, “Appear, Lightning Beasts!”

A few lightning forms appeared around Lir as he yelled that. They slowly formed into beasts and surrounded Pia.

But even after seeing Lir, Pia still smiled, relaxed.

“Ah, I see. You’re pulling this on me?”

Riphal nodded. “Ah ah. Then surrendering would be better? Because I’m not a person who will kill women. After you surrender and give us your information, then I can release you.”

“Ara, you’re so gentle.”

“Can’t you tell by seeing?”

“Aha.” She laughed. That was a relaxed laugh. In this kind of situation, that woman was still able to laugh, relaxed.

Then.

“… If I were to kill such gentle boys, then I would feel sad, so forget it, forget it. I did warn you already? Don’t attack Geihlficlant. Understand?”

Saying this, she lowered her stance.

Seeing this, Lir said, “I won’t let you escape.” And raised his ring. The lightning beasts ran towards her.

But Pia still laughed, “Muoh~!” She shouted adorably.

A red light appeared from her fingers—no, it appeared from the red-coloured fake nails that she was wearing on her five fingers and sliced apart the lightning beasts that Lir had summoned.

Then,

“Then goodbye. If I meet you on the battlefield after this meeting—then I’ll really kill you.”

Then she took something that was like a small marble and threw it into the sky.

The marble released a bright light.

“…”

She could not be seen anywhere.

The three of them looked at where Pia had been speechlessly for a moment.

Then.

"… the Azure Princess. Huh." Riphal said softly.

Then he looked into the sky.

The Queen of the Azure Princess, Pia Varliere had said that they could not attack Geihlficlant. She had said they could not attack Eilosendo. If they attacked, she would kill them.

He remembered that sentence.

He remembered her words.

After remembering that, he said, "Really, what was that. Even though she had a cute face, she was a monster on the inside…" Riphal turned to his childhood friends who had experienced the same burdens as he had.

"Alright, what do we do? What do you feel about what happened? Do we face them later?"

Reaz replied, "If we don't do it then we can't start anything. And the number of enemies using the Rhule Fragmei will increase. Even if it isn't like this, Roland is already using them. Fighting with the Azure Princess can be a preparation for fighting with Roland."

Lir shrugged, "If we can win. The sacrifice will be huge."

But Riphal laughed. "Large sacrifices didn't start from now. Isn't it?"

The two of them nodded. "Yes."

"Then," Riphal said. "Then let's go. We wasted a little time. Let's head towards Eilosendo—then Geihlficlant. Reaz, give the command."

So Reaz raised his arm and waved.

"Progress!"

Then he started to order the army.

Gastark Empire had started to move towards the Central Continent.

Riphal looked at this scene.

Then he turned around and looked in the direction they were heading towards.

In front of them was Eilosendo, the Geihlficlant Empire and the mercenaries, the Azure Princess that Geihlficlant had hired.

And then even more in front of them was the Fallen Dark Hero was looking from the south.

Looking at this.

Riphal looked at all of this.

"…Alright, this is the beginning. The beginning of our story." He told this to Reaz, Lir and his companions.

Document Outline

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